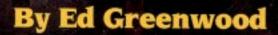
Advanced Dungeons Dragons



# Volo's Guide to WATERDEEP



# Volo's Guide To Waterdeep

### A Toast to Waterdeep

Here's to the City of Splendors Deep water where the edge of the sea Meets rivers of gold; all the coins ever made Flow past — gods, throw some to me!

(A traditional toast, sung in the taverns of the Waterdeep)



### Credits

Design: Ed Greenwood **Editing:** Julia Martin **Cover Art:** Robh Ruppel **Interior Art:** Valerie Valusek Cartography: Joel Meyer and

Dennis Kauth

Typesetting Angelika Lokotz **Production:** 

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# Preface

The engaging rogue Volo has done a better job on this tome, know ye, than on his misguided volume on magic ( *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical*). It were best he should leave dabbling in Art to those who know better.

Naetheless, he missed a lot of Water-deep that even an occasional visitor such as myself can spot. Much, no doubt, passed unseen beneath his very nose. He's got some things quite wrong, too—but ye'll discover what when ye meet them, even if that's (ahem) just a might late.

My colleague, Ed of the Greenwood, has prevailed upon me to include some small items of import to gamers. Reluctantly I have done so, adding probable details—trust not in their veracity I warn ye!—of various Waterdhavians at the back of this tome (including the impetuous Volo himself). All the rest, errors and all, I've left. I must warn ye. Khelben and his lady Laeral laughed to tears on several occasions while reading this work—and as I can find little amusing in it, I can only conclude they found hilarious errors!

May the gods smile upon ye, traveler, broader than they do upon Volo.

Elminster of Shadowdale



P.S. FR1 Waterdeep and the North remains the definitive guide to features of Waterdeep, augmented by the City System and Ruins of Undermountain boxed sets, the Knight of the Living Dead gamebook, and the module FRE3 Waterdeep. Those desiring to explore alleys Volo mentions would do well to consult where the alleys meet with the sewers, on page 28 of Waterdeep and the North, if they wish to avoid (or find, I suppose) danger.

One note more: For the safety of Waterdeep, I've refrained from passing on details of the abodes or persons of Durnan, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, Laeral, Mirt, Piergeiron, and certain others—and cut out much or all of what Volo had to say about them, too. If you'd know such folk, meet them yourselves—and learn what they'll grant ye. Enjoy thy read. . .

Volo's Ratings System					
Daggers (Alleyways, Courtyards,etc.	Pipes (Inns)	Tankards (Taverns)	Coins (Prices)		
Worst	B	O	Lowest		
B	BB	00	<b>3 8</b>		
Better	RRR	OOO	Average		
I BBB	B B B B	OOOO			
Best BBBB	e e e e e e	00000	Highest		



# A Word from Volo



his guidebook is the result of extensive, often hazardous explorations of the City of Splendors,

most colorful city of the Sword Coast. It is the dream of many folk across Faerun to someday visit this fabled, bustling market-place and grandest of abodes. This tome attempts to steer visitors to sights and folk they want to see—or avoid.

No one traveler can go everywhere and see all in Waterdeep, and with passing time, somethings I have written will change.

With a few exceptions, I couldn't enter the villas and walled homes of the nobles without invitation, so they do not appear herein (and for obvious reasons, I dare not write of my few covert glimpses of their splendors—ladies, I'll not forget).

If you visit a guildhall in Waterdeep and are not a member, you are typically shown (as I was) into a small number of meeting rooms, and are not free to wander. Watching, attentive guards deter prying, and the result is a boring visit unless you have business with the guild. Guild members would not look favorably on my giving away secrets, either, and so I avoid describing guild buildings. For the same reason, temples, shrines,

and other places restricted to those of one faith aren't explored in these pages.

My forays into the City of the Dead, the sewers, and various City fortresses were also severely limited, and their coverage here reflects that. I believe only a longtime citizen of Waterdeepwhich I'm not—should attempt a guide to the pleasant parkland that houses the city's legions of dead.

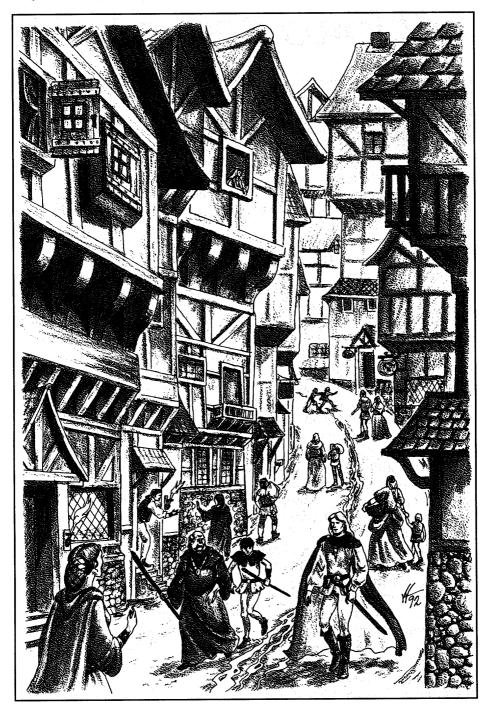
Anyone drawing near any gate of the city can see Mount Water-deep—and that's as close as most of us are ever going to get. Everyone goes to gawk at Castle Water-deep and at Piergeiron's Palace (again, seeing little indeed of their inside, except by invitation of the Lords), so I've largely left those out, too.

A traveler could spend a lifetime in Waterdeep and not fully sample its every nuance, pleasure, back alley or experience. There must be many noteworthy places I've missed. Those omissions aside, I think you'll agree this is the best guidebook to Waterdeep available. I urge you all to remember with favor the name of:

Volo V

(Volothamp Geddarm)







## CasTle Ward



ome to most of Waterdeep's administrative buildings and buildings of state, this first ward of the city is

the heart of power in Waterdeep today. It's also the area most folk who'll tell you of Waterdeep talk about. Much has been written about it,¹ so in these pages, I'll treat it more lightly than any other ward of Waterdeep. Any fool can see the mountain and the castle from far off. You don't need my words to find them!

Although it looks large on a map, much of it is taken up by Mount Waterdeep, the rugged height that protects much of the city from the full fury of the winter storms (which blow from west-northwest). The mountain is honeycombed with caverns and passages where the city guard maintains its armories, the city's

granary and its flying griffon steeds. These caverns are linked to Castle Waterdeep, from which the ward takes its name, and various cliff top eyries (landing and springing-aloft areas for the griffons)—and, it is rumored, to both Piergeiron's Palace and the many levels of Undermountain, the vast dungeon or subterranean city beneath Waterdeep.

City watch and guard patrols are heavy in this ward. The city guard deliberately puts on a show of force in this district.<sup>2</sup>

### Landmarks

The most prominent landmarks of Castle Ward are the mountain and the castle. The next most important is the many-spired Palace of Waterdeep, popularly known these days as Piergeiron's Palace, after the First, and only

<sup>1</sup>FR1 Waterdeep and the North describes features of Mount Waterdeep (page 22), Castle Ward (page 23), and all city features at some length. The City System boxed set includes detailed maps of the main aboveground structure of Castle Waterdeep, as well as detailed street maps of the city, and a selection of building floor plans. Module FRE3 Waterdeep contains notes on the Yawning Portal inn and a partial map of Blackstaff Tower.

The *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set describes the uppermost levels of vast Undermountain, including its surface connections and the infamous subterranean smuggling port known as Skullport. The novel *Elfshadow* gives the reader a taste of Waterdhavian social life, and a glimpse of many

features of the city-including some ancient gates linking it with far places.

<sup>2</sup>City watch patrols are detailed on page 17 of FR1 Waterdeep and the North. In this ward, four-sword detachments pass a given point about every 8 minutes and look into a tavern or inn dining room about every 20 minutes.

As detailed on pages 15-16 and 23 of the *City System* set booklet, the city guard also patrols Castle Ward, in six-man detachments. Typical patrol details are as given therein, on page 23. Reinforcements will be a dozen LG hm F3s to F6s clad in chain mail and armed with maces, long swords, daggers, slings, and a polearm appropriate to the situation.

Guard patrols pass a given street location about every 15 minutes, but appear in 1d4 minutes when

a city watch patrol blows a warning horn in this ward.



publicly known, Lord of Water-deep. His court is held there, and he entertains visiting embassies and envoys there on an almost daily basis. Accompanying one of them is probably the best way to get a look inside. The palace has four gates. From the north, these are Horn Gate, Sally Gate, Main Gate, and Guard Gate. You'll be challenged if you try to use any way in but the Main Gate.

So pass through it. The entry hall beyond is impressive enough—an echoing room all of polished marble, empty except for benches along the walls carved into the likenesses of seated lions, and the massive pillars that hold the upper floors

of the palace up.

For me, though, the most impressive thing in the palace was the scale model of the entire city—building by building—set on a huge stone table in the office of the city clerks. To find it, turn right and go through the archway at the end of the entry hall. The large, grand stairs leading out of the hall in the other direction are the way to Piergeiron's court and audience chambers.

The palace stands with its back hard against a cliff face of Mount Waterdeep. To the north and south are barracks. A small tower set into a mountain cleft to the north guards an entrance to the tunnels of Mount Waterdeep. Known, imaginatively enough, as the Mountain Tower, it is strictly off limits to the public.

There is a large open courtyard in front of the palace. To even get to the Main Gate, you must pass a lone tower in the midst of this open space: Ah-

ghairon's Tower.

This slim stone tower has been totally enclosed above, around, and beneath in a series of potent, invisible magical barriers since the death of the famous wizard, many years ago.3 Don't approach too closely – on the north side, a skeletal figure still stands facing the tower with arms raised, about 10 feet away from its side. It is all that remains of a wizard who tried to get into the tower in order, no doubt, to seize Ahghairon's magic for himself. He dispelled the outermost barrier, a forcecage, but was trapped between it and the *prismatic* sphere within when the forcecage reformed behind him.

The man's name has been forgotten with the passage of years, and his robes and flesh have both rotted away, but the magic of the tower holds the bones in position. Until Piergeiron forbade it some years ago, it was a favorite game of local children to rearrange the wizard's bones. They can be dislodged with a stick, but they always drift slowly back into the same position, floating upright,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For details of the defenses of Ahghairon's Tower, see page 22 of Waterdeep and the North.



with arms outspread.

If you travel north along the northern tongue of Mount Waterdeep from the palace, and turn west at its end, you will come to the sea at the end of Julthoon Street, which is the northernmost boundary of the ward. The land here falls away swiftly so you are higher than the city wall and can readily look over it, far out to sea. Here, in war, great engines have been set up to hurl rocks and fire at ships approaching the shore. In peacetime, these are all hidden away inside Mount Waterdeep and, rumor has it, in storage on the ethereal plane\*-along with six companions of the silent sentinel who'll be standing looking out to sea with you: the Walking Statue of Waterdeep.

This 90-foot-tall stone golem was created by Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, the Archmage of Waterdeep. One of seven identical constructs, it is intended to fill and defend any gap in Waterdeep's walls created by a besieging toe. Of gray granite, it looks like a regal human with an impassive face—and it spends the years here, enduring the birds, as it stares endlessly out to sea, awaiting a call to service that

Waterdhavians hope will never come.<sup>3</sup> It is sometimes used as a guiding beacon for expected ships during very rough storms. Wizards of the Watchful Order cast light spells upon it, and Piergeiron moves it to a desired

signaling location.

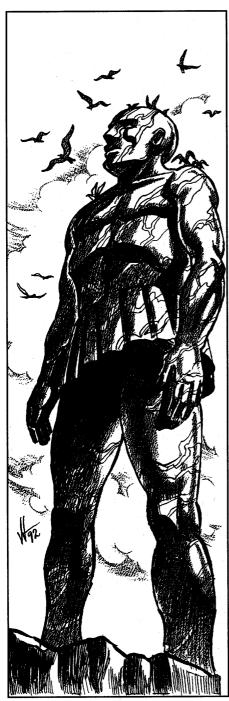
The cliff that you and the Walking Statue are standing on top of is known as the Gull Leap for the seabirds that nest here, and for its use by misguidedly depressed people and stampeding cattle before the city wall was built. If you stay close to the wall and turn south, going along the western side of the tongue of Mount Waterdeep, you'll be in a little hidden corner of Waterdeep that even many folk in the city have never seen, and know about only vaguely. A street called the Cliffride runs to four luxurious villas that stand here amid trees and terraced gardens in a little ledge walled in by Mount Waterdeep.

These grand stone houses were built long ago by various noble families in this exclusive and readily defensible enclave. They soon fell out of favor. Lashed by the full fury of the sea storms, they are damp all year round and a nightmare of slick

<sup>4</sup> Rumor, Elminster tells us, has it correctly. The ethereal plane also holds many extra sections of city wall that can appear in position along the eastern boundary of the city if Waterdeep is threatened.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Location #44 on the color map. The Walking Statue is AC1, MV 4, has 18 HD and 140 hp, attacks once per round at THAC0 3, doing 6d10 damage with its mighty fists (against buildings 3 points of structural damage per round if the AD&D® 1st Edition rules governing siege damage are used), and is harmed by spells as a normal stone golem is (see Vol. 1 of the Monstrous Compendium). To damage the Walking Statue, you must strike it with a +3 or better magical weapon. It is a minor crime of the Second Plaint (see Waterdeep and the North, pages 18-19) to deface the Statue by marking it.





ice everywhere outside and deathly chill inside during winter. They can be rented from their owners for 25 gp/month and up (50 gp/month during the summer), and are residences large enough to house up to 40 people each. As one proceeds south, they are: Fair Winds, on the sea side of the road; Marblehearth, on the land side; Stormwatch, on the sea side; and, tucked into the end of the land, overhung by a frowning cliff, Heroes' Rest. Heroes' Rest was nicknamed Cold Comfort by the Company of Crazed Venturers, who spent a winter here. The name has stuck in the city, and few now remember the proper name. If you're wealthy enough and don't mind fighting off the thieves who'll inevitably come to investigate anyone rich enough to stay here, these can be pleasant places indeed for a visitor to Waterdeep to stay for a month or more during a warm summer. Otherwise, be glad your bones sleep somewhere more dry.

The largest landmark of the built-up area of Castle Ward is also the largest open space in the city: the Market. The Market is encircled by Traders' Way on the north and Bazaar Street on the south. It is a huge marketplace often crammed with a maze of stalls and camped vendors. You can easily spend days and nights—except in winter—lost in the myriad shopping opportuni-



ties here. The place never closes for mere darkness. But be aware: Many thieves spend days and

nights there, too.

It has been said many times that you can buy *anything* in Waterdeep, from ancient spells to floating cloud castles. Well, if you can't find it elsewhere in the city, come here.

The formal boundaries of Castle Ward are drawn by the water of the harbor and the coast up to Julthoon Street, and run along the south side of Julthoon Street to Shield Street, where they turn south to Traders' Way, run east to enclose the Market, and then turn south along the High Road all the way to Snail Street. Castle Ward takes in the west side of Snail Street down to Shesstra's Street, where it turns west to Gut Alley runs north on it to Belnimbra's Street, and thence to Lackpurse Lane. Dock Ward is to the east and south of Lackpurse Lane, and Castle Ward on its north and west as it runs to the harbor.

Folk in love with power but not yet rich enough to rise above the pursuit of it are said around the city to dwell in that part of Castle Ward north of the broad avenue of Waterdeep Way More southerly parts of the ward are dominated by the barracks and warehouses attached to the castle and by the Bell Tower (used to signal fires, attacks, and calls for assembly at the palace<sup>6</sup>), or are largely indistinguishable from the neighboring Dock Ward and the Trades Ward. Castle Ward's dockside is, however, far more heavily patrolled than Dock Ward, and hence safer for goods and visitors.

There's also an interesting feature in a warehouse located in the docks here at the foot of Coin Alley on its east side. In the warehouse's cellar is a shaft opening into a tidal wash under the building—a basin fitted with iron gratings. When the tide is in, fish often swim in. The gratings prevent some from swimming back out. At low tide, the warehouse owner can go down and fish in his own pond for fish to sell or for a meal.

The most famous feature of Castle Ward's docks, however, is Mirt's Mansion. This fortresshome nestles on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep amid stands of trees. It can be reached from Coin Alley or Tarnished Silver Alley both of which run to it, or from its own dock, the aptly named Smugglers' Dock.

Mirt the Moneylender is widely believed to be a Lord of Waterdeep. When in the city, this gruff ex-mercenary opens his house (before highsun only) for supplicants needing to borrow money. Although he seems a very

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Location #9 on the color map. Map 3 of the *City System* boxed set gives a typical barracks floor plan and one for the palace stables.



patient, even kindly sort when it comes to the repayment of loans, it doesn't seem that way to talk to him—and anyone thinking of paying an unauthorized visit to his home is warned that it bristles with more human, monstrous, and magical guards than I've ever seen in one place before.

The ward is also home to perhaps the most luxurious inn in Waterdeep, the Jade Jug, and to a large and splendid temple dedicated to Lathander Consisting of eight linked towers standing in their own walled, tree-cloaked compound, the Spires of the Morning rise to greet the morning sun in the angle between Julthoon Street and Calamastyr Lane. Traders' Way runs right to the temple gates. 8

Between the temple and the Palace, along the eastern face of Mount Waterdeep, another splendid tower rises, surrounded by its own wall. This is Blackstaff Tower, home of the Archmage of

Waterdeep, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, his lady Laeral, and their apprentices. Laeral is a mage of power herself, who was once leader of the adventuring company known as the Nine, and sister to Alustriel, High Lady of Silverymoon; The Simbul, Witch Queen of Aglarond; Storm Silverhand, the Bard of Shadowdale, and others.

The ward is also home to many guildhalls: the House of Gems, of the Jewellers' Guild; 10 the Map House, headquarters of the Surveyors', Map & Chart-Makers' Guild; Fellowship Hall, of the Fellowship of Innkeepers;12 the Master Bakers' Hall, of the Bakers' Guild;<sup>13</sup> Guildhall of the Order, of the Solemn Order of Recognized Furriers & Woolmen;<sup>14</sup> the Pewterers' and Casters' Guildhall;<sup>15</sup> the House of the Fine Caryers, of the Guild of Fine Carvers;16 and the Market Hall, of the Council of Farmer-Grocers. The most spectacular of these headquarters is the Tower of the

<sup>8</sup>Location #43 on the color map. Partial floor plan maps of the temple appear on Map 4 of the City

System boxed set.

10 Location #11 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Location #1 on the color map. Elminster refuses to furnish any details of Mirt or his mansion-which should confirm to most of you, as it did to Ed, that Mirt *must* be a Lord of Waterdeep. Partial mansion floor plans appear on Map 2 of the *City System* boxed set.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Location #32 on the color map. Partial maps of the tower appear in FR3 *Waterdeep*, and it also features in the novels *Elfshadow* and *Waterdeep*. Elminster refused to pass on any details of Khelben, Laeral, or the tower. Pages 52 and 58 of FR5 *The Savage Frontier* mention Laeral's fate prior to Khelben's rescuing her and the beginning of their relationship.

Location #15 on the color map. Its floor plan appears on Map 3 of the City System boxed set.

Location #16 on the color map.Location #22 on the color map.

Location #34 on the color map.

Location #37 on the color map.Location #39 on the color map.

Location #42 on the color map.





Order, seat of the Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors, which rises on the Street of Bells, and is visited by many desiring to arrange a guild fireguard on their property or to purchase the casting of a spell.

Several shopkeepers in the ward are also the heads or spokesmen for their guilds. If you like the taste of power and authority Castle Ward is the place to go.

### Places of Interest in Castle Ward

### Homes

House of Loene

The walled home of the beautiful adventuress Loene resembles a miniature castle. Towers and turrets are everywhere, largely because Loene loves round rooms and curving stairs.

By night, or when expecting unwelcome visitors, Loene activates the magic of the ornate, 20-foot-high iron fence surrounding her house. Any who touch it suffer miniature lightnings.<sup>19</sup>

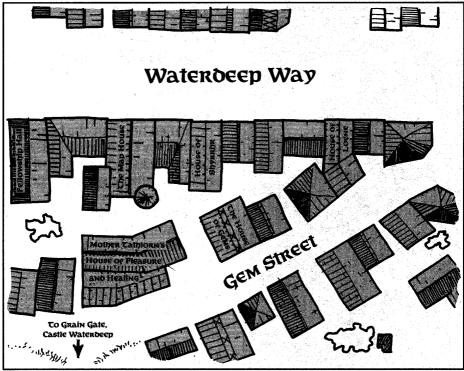
Loene's home fronts on Water-deep Way and backs onto Gem Street. During her remodeling of the mansion she purchased on this site, she tore down its extensive, warehouse-like rear and had a lawn, a garden, and a mature elm tree magically transplanted here—an interesting project that kept the mage Nain Keenwhistler busy for quite some time.

Loene's luxurious home is said to be furnished with beautiful things and to contain hidden

<sup>18</sup>Location #30 on the color map. Page 44 of *Waterdeep and the North* gives spellcasting prices charged by this guild, and explains something of their services (see also page 32). All of the guilds are covered in the FR1 *Waterdeep and the North* sourcebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Loene (pronounced *LOW-enn*) is detailed on page 53 of *Waterdeep and the North*, and also features in the novel *Elfshadow*. Her fence deals 2d4 points of electrical damage per contact or per round of continual contact, and has a special *spellguard* upon it. When *dispel magic* or *disintegrate* spells are cast on it, they are absorbed, their energy transformed instantly into *chain lightning* that strikes first at the source of the magic, and deals d6 of damage per level of the caster of the original attacking spell.





magic items acquired during her adventures, but it is open only to her friends. It has other magical defenses, I'm told, that make it a veritable fortress.

House of Shyrrhr

This Lady of the Court is good friends with Piergeiron, whom she aids by chaperoning visiting diplomats and learning all she can from them to pass on to the First Lord of Waterdeep. Her small but luxurious house on Waterdeep Way is simply but

cozily furnished, with carpets, lounge cushions, three bedrooms with round canopied beds, a round bathing pool, and a formal dining room where she can entertain.<sup>20</sup>

### Shops

Aurora's Whole Realms Shop Catalogue Counter

Throughout this guide, I mention the outlets of this popular Realms-wide retail chain in each ward of the city because most

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> The house of Shyrrhr (pronounced *SHEER-hur*) *is* #14 on the color map. It contains little but a grand selection of wines, a room-sized closet of fine gowns, about 20 gp, and—on many nights—Piergeiron, who has slipped through a secret tunnel connecting the pantry of Shyrrhr's house with the palace. They like to relax and talk together, and trust each other absolutely. Piergeiron pays Shyrrhr's few expenses in return for her spying and hospitality services to the city.



city-bred travelers live near one, or at least are familiar with Aurora's catalogue. This makes for minimal delay and uncertainty when emergency purchases must be made, and results in goods of known quality.

The Castle Ward Aurora's outlet is the first shopfront west of the Jade Jug, on the north side of Waterdeep Way. It provides home delivery for patrons by means of a coach and a six-man team within Castle Ward only. It also has four guards who work in shifts of two and two, a calmly cultured, middle-aged lady counter clerk, Cathal Sunspear, and a service-mage, Xanatrar Hillhorn. Xanatrar is known for his excellent singing at parties and whenever he wants to impress a good-looking lady.

# Balthorr's Rare and Wondrous Treasures

This shop stands on the east side of the Street of the Sword, south of Selduth Street. The wealthy shopper can buy a wide selection of curios here, especially coins from all over Toril, gems, and regalia. The proprietor is an expert on the currency uniforms

and badges used by most realms and military units of Faerun, and can make up colorful stories about the history of particular items on the spot. I've heard that he'll buy things without asking questions as to their origin—making him very handy for adventurers who want to exchange battle trophies for money.

*Proprietor:* Balthorr "the Bold" Olaskos, a hearty, loud-voiced, bubbling fellow with a ready smile and firm handshake, is the proprietor.<sup>21</sup>

### The Golden Key

\* \* \* \*

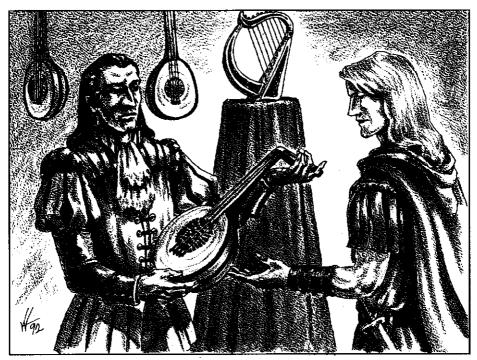
This shop, on the east side of Warriors' Way, north of Waterdeep Way, 22 sells locks and fastenings of all sorts except large, vault-like doors, door bars, and strongchests. The proprietor makes custom locks to order, and guarantees that he's never sold a key that will open the lock you buy from him to anyone else. (In other words, your lock is unique.) Many of his locks require several keys turned in certain combinations to open. All products are made on the premises, except for certain door chains, which are imported from the northern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Location#28onthecolormap.Balthorrisafenceforstolengoods—at40% of street value—especially coins, gens, and regalia (see Waterdeen and the North pages 31-32)

coins, gems, and regalia (see *Waterdeep and the North* pages 31-32).

<sup>22</sup> Location #21 on the color map. Ansilver has at least four gargoyle guardians in his shop to prevent thefts. He also wears a magical master key around his neck, that he tries to keep very secret. Over the years many have seen him use it and have deduced that it opens all normal locks on contact. If it encounters mechanical or magical traps on a lock, it reveals this to the wielder without triggering them, but does not open the lock or deactivate the traps. Its precise powers are not known to any in Waterdeep except Ansilver.





Moonshaes where they have been hardened in dragon fire!

Proprietor: Ansilver the Locksmith, a white-haired, elderly but alert man, is the proprietor. He wears thick spectacles, has a sharp-beaked nose, and has a habit of humming continually.

# Halambar Lutes & Harps

This shop, found on the east side of the Street of the Sword and a good walk up from Waterdeep Way sells all sorts of stringed musical instruments, from the lyre of Amn to the twostring of Mintarn. It is famous up and down the Sword Coast for the

distinctive mellow sound of its lutes, but even Inner Sea folk have heard of the shop's prize attraction: the Harp that Sings by Itself.

This small, dark traveling harp sits on its own velvet-covered plinth, safely above the reach of inquisitive (or acquisitive!) visitors, and softly plays old airs, ballads, and lays of the North. It is said by some to have belonged to the famous bard Mintiper Moonsilver, but most dispute this. It is older than he, and was known to have been in Silverymoon when he was wandering the North. Its full powers aren't known to any alive in the Realms today and it is a unique magic item, truly beyond price. Halambar won't let





patrons touch it and won't sell it. (I have discovered that the plinth it sits upon is actually a covered stone golem, placed there by Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun to protect the harp.)

Halambar's instruments typically cost 1,000 gp each or more. He has smaller, plainer pieces made by his apprentices or secondhand pieces that go for mere hundreds of gold pieces. A place to visit, even if you're not musical.

Here's a special gift idea, for the rich only: For 600 gp, you can buy a jewel case or snuff box enchanted to play a short melody when opened. Exquisite, but somehow I feel you'd grow tired of the same tune quickly.

Proprietor: Kriios Halambar, guildmaster of the Council of Musicians, Instrument-Makers, and Choristers owns and runs this shop. He is an inscrutable, heavy-lidded man of long black hair, large black-pupiled eyes, and a strong streak of snobbery.<sup>23</sup>

### The Halls of Hilmer, Master Armorer

This shining shop has a front of armor plate—old armor from vanquished foes of Waterdeep, bolted together, polished a deep, gleaming blue, and protected from weather and theft by potent spells. Beware lightning-like arcs of energy should you strike or wrench at a piece! It stands on the west side of the Street of Bells north of Waterdeep Way its gleam visible up and down the street.

Inside is a showroom and fitting room, with doors into a weapons practice room for clients to practice running, turning, fighting, and climbing stairs in armor, and the huge, cluttered workshops of Hilmer and his apprentices. Plate armor hangs—or, in the form of full suits, stands everywhere. Hilmer only makes plate, but he's generally acknowledged as the best, or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Location #26 on the color map. The distinctive sounds of Halambar lutes are largely due to his secretly soaking the wood he makes them of in Waterdhavian harbor water in his cellars. The precise powers of the Harp are left to the DM. Anyone who successfully makes off with it will be pursued by the Harpers—to whom the instrument is a treasure—as well as by agents hired by Halambar. It actually has nothing to do with Mintiper and was made long ago in lost and fallen Myth Drannor.





The Street of Bells

among the best, in all the Sword Coast lands. His custom suits generally cost 4,000 to 6,000 gp, depending on the size of the wearer and the ornamentation. He hates chasing and overelaborate fluting, but has done enameled armors for Calishite satraps, at 8,600 gp each.

Hilmer will sell existing armor apprentice pieces and replacement pieces, such as gauntlets, that are not custom fitted for mere hundreds of gold pieces, but he will not set his mark (a stamp of a gauntlet closing on a sword, and breaking it into three pieces) on such shelf stock. Hilmer armor is *all* custom made.

Hilmer knows at a glance if armor fits properly and at a touch if its metal is suspect or if a wearer is using a blade or shield too heavy for him. He is a master craftsman and regularly ignores offers of estates and thousands in gold to become master armorer of this or that kingdom.

Thieves leave his shop alone. It's much easier to steal Hilmer armor from those who have bought it—because several of the suits of armor are animated metal constructs, that defend the place at all times! Others protect his nearby metals warehouses.

*Proprietor:* Hilmer, the proprietor, is a tall, strong, and soft-



spoken man, with shoulders as wide as most doors and hands with a grip of iron. He is a just, honest man.<sup>24</sup>

### Olmhazan's Jewels

This glittering shop stands on the west side of the High Road, just across from the mouth of Spendthrift Alley. Its front is fashioned of silvered and polished stone to resemble a huge faceted gem. "Olmhazan," said one noble to me at a feast, "has never been restricted by such trifles as good taste."

Inside, all the gems one can think of, except very rare or magical sorts, such as amaratha, kings' tears, and rogue stones, can be bought. A scattering of beljuril shards makes the impressive display of gems wink and sparkle continually.

Thieves are few since one was partially devoured by the guardians of the shop: two trained mimics. One masquerades as a gem display counter, and the other as part of the front doorjamb and the gigantic gem storefront.

Proprietor: Jhauntar Olm-

hazan, Gentleman Speaker for the Jewelers' Guild, owns and runs this shop. He is a sneering, superior sort, who dismisses all country folk and those who dwell around or east of the Sea of Fallen Stars as barbarians.<sup>25</sup>

### Phalantar's Philtres & Components

5 5 5 5

This shop can be found on the east side of the Street of Bells, just north of Waterdeep Way. The odor of exotic spices wafts out onto the street whenever its circular door is opened. Inside is a strange wonderland of dried branches, firmly stoppered jars, and interesting-looking shells, skulls, baskets of bones, and labeled drawers.

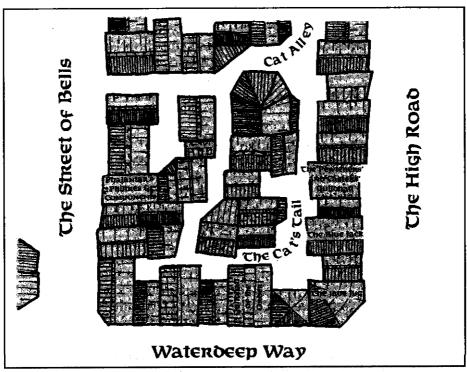
Here you can buy medicines, herbs, and rare substances used in the making of perfumes, scented oils, poisons, and as material components in the casting of spells. The herbs aren't very fresh, but a wizard will find the selection here better than anywhere else I've ever seenand the proprietor doesn't ask questions about why you want baatezu blood or deadly night-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Location #28 on the color map. Hilmer's guardians are battle horrors, which are variant helmed horrors (detailed in FA1 *Halls of the High King*). His helmed horrors are lawful neutral and bound in loyalty to him. Rumor has it that he acquired them in the ruins of Myth Drannor in his early adventuring days.

They are INT High (14); AL LN; AC 2; MC 12, Fl12 (A) plus dimension door 1/day, up to 60 yards; HD 16; THAC0 12; #AT 1 plus two 2-5 hp dmg magic missiles every 3 rounds; Dmg by weapon or 1d4; SD spell immunities; SZ M; ML 20; see Halls of the High King, page 42, for details.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Location #38 on the color map. Add 15-25 gp to the base prices of all gemstones to arrive at Olmhazan's selling prices.





shade or ask your name.

Theft is discouraged by the dust-covered, immobile stone form of a man, face eternally frozen in a look of fear, who's propped, arms spread and in a frantic running position, against a wall inside the door, "Oh yes," the proprietor purred, when I asked about him. "He tried to leave without paying, late one night when I wasn't even open. He ran afoul of a certain substance I keep handy. I haven't decided when to release him yet.

Try not to brush against him. 'Twould be a pity if he fell and shattered."

Nobles tell me this shop<sup>26</sup> is guarded not only with *dust of petrification*, but with traps that release various paralyzing and sleep-inducing gases. They tell me the owner will sell you scrolls and any minor magic items he has on hand, too—if you ask quietly, and aren't known to have any connections to the city watch or city guard.

Proprietor: Phalantar Orivan, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Location #33 on the color map. Phalantar is a fence for stolen goods at 35% of their street price (see pages 31-32 of *Waterdeep and the North*). He is very rich. He sponsors some adventuring bands in return for a share of their loot (substances he can sell in his shop, including evil or flawed magic items they don't want) and bankrolls some mercenary companies in the Sword Coast lands, too, in return for a share of their profits.



man of soft, smooth movements, who always seems to be gently smiling, is the proprietor. He is said to deal with adventurers and mages regularly and to be fabulously rich.

### Tavenns

The Blue Jack

!!! DO

This watering hole is named for the blue leather armor worn by the proprietor in his long-ago adventuring days. The armor still hangs, in rotting tatters, above the bar. The tavern specializes in low prices and fast service. This specialization is a success; the place is always crammed. Folk go elsewhere to sit and chat or do business, but duck in here to load up on food and drink before hurrying on about their day. The Jack, as citizens call it (a short form of the name, true, but most call it that because of the many drinking jacks you can empty there), stands on the west side of the High Road, just north of its intersection with Waterdeep Way.

In such a busy place, encounters between enemies are not uncommon—but the staff can hurl drinking jacks hard and accurately from behind the bar, and six able-bodied scrappers can be mustered if the kitchens and bar are emptied by the proprietor.

Patrons are not encouraged to stay long—there are stools and stand-up elbowrests, but no booths or seats, and little food. Only cold cut platters, garlic sauce, pickles, handwheels of cheese, and hot biscuits covered with melted butter are available (1 cp per serving, each).

The drinkables are similarly limited: ale at 1 cp/jack, bitters at 2 cp, stout at 3 cp, zzar at 4 cp, and wine at 4 cp/tallglass (either Neverwinter white or red wine

from Amn).

*Proprietor*: Immithar the Glove, a fast-moving, canny fellow, is the tavern's proprietor. He is quick with a joke or to mimic—perfectly—the speech of other folk.<sup>27</sup>

### The Crawling Spider

This strange place has a mock underground decor done with plaster slurry and rock rubble. Glowing mosses and lichens have been placed on the walls and ceiling and are watered regularly. These, plus a few netted *glowing* globes, provide a dim light for the place. Stuffed spiders have been affixed to the ceiling or hang from threads. The waitresses, hired for their sensuous walks and love of male company, wear black bodysuits and masks to make them look like drow.

Who drinks here? Dwarves, half-orcs, and other subterra-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Location #36 on the color map.





nean dwellers who miss home, adventurers, and—surprisingly—priests of all faiths, looking for a thrill! They form a regular clientele, and have ever since this place opened. Of all the taverns in Waterdeep, the Crawling Spider has the most dedicated patrons. They will come clear across the city to drink here, ignoring other places.

The Spider never seems to close. The visitor soon discovers that one of the cave mouths leads to the jakes and another to a cellar dance floor. Many cave mouths open off this floor and lead to tiny private caverns used for intimate personal conferences and for

planning shady business.

If visitors cause trouble, patrons will leap to take care of it. And they include many veteran adventurers among their number!

The fare differs each night, but it's always 1 sp/head, and always includes soup, a loaf of bread, meat, and fried greens. Drinks are extra. Ale is 2 cp/tankard, stout 4 cp, and zzar or wine is 5 cp/tallglass. Whiskey is 1 sp/flagon, and it's vile!

Proprietress: Welvreene Thalmit, a short, raw-voiced, and alluring woman with dark eyes, is this tavern's proprietress. She is romantic at heart who loves adventurers.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Location #23 on the color map.



# Wannions' Way

The Street of the Sword

The Dragon's Head Tavern

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This modest place caters to older Waterdhavians: married couples, retired ex-adventurers, shopkeepers, merchants, and others who like to sit quietly and talk over their drinks.

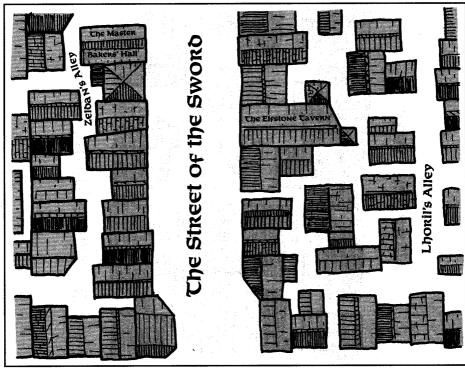
Pipe smoke usually hangs heavy in the air in this place, and—because this place faces Ahghairon's Tower and the palace beyond—talk is often of politics, the future of Waterdeep, and of grand plans. Diplomats and visitors like to drop in here because it's safe and they're

unlikely to be hailed by anyone or drawn into an argument.

The stuffed, mounted blue dragon's head for which the tavern is named was from a hatchling. It is dusty and motheaten with age, but still thrusts, large and menacing, well out into the taproom. One of the bartenders often hangs towels to dry from its teeth.

Tobacco (5 cp/pouch) and drinks can be bought at the bar—but aside from sausage rolls (4 cp/platter or 2cp/ handplate) and stew (1cp/bowl), there's little food to be had here. Drinks are 1 cp/tankard for ale, 2 cp for stout, 2 cp/tallglass for wine, and 3 cp





for zzar. The bar has an extensive selection of brandies, liqueurs, and rarities (such as firewine and elverquisst), which are sold by the glass. These cost from 7 sp/glass for brandy to 9 gp/glass for elverquisst or Tashlutan amberthroat.

*Proprietor:* The proprietor, Vorn Laskadarr, is short, stubblefaced, and unlovely to the eye, but also quick, efficient, and kindly.<sup>29</sup>

The Elfstone Tavern

This old, dimly lit tavern stands

on the east side of the Street of the Sword, north of Waterdeep Way. It caters to elves and half-elves, and is an earthy-smelling place, where living trees have been encouraged through elven patience and forestry skill to grow up from the cellar and through the taprooms. By day, rooftop shutters are pulled aside to let rain and sunlight in for the trees. By night, *dancing lights* spells bathe the place in soft, floating, blue motes of light.

Here elves gather to drink Evereskan clearwater (2 gp/ tallglass), moonwine (4 gp/ tallglass), elverquisst (14 gp/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Location #20 on the color map. Its floor plan appears on Map 3 in the City System boxed set.



tallglass), guldathen nectar (16 gp/glass) and maerlathen blue wine (17 gp/glass), and dine on biscuits spread with roe, shrimp, spiced silverfin, crab meat, or mint jelly (all 1 gp/platter). You can also eat skewers of sizzled squirrel, rabbit, or venison done in a green sauce (2 gp each). These are so good that the gods would ask for more!

Gentle harp, pipe, flute, and choral music is performed and service is fast, near-silent, and graceful. This is a place where dwarves and half-orcs will be driven away, some humans and half lings are tolerated in small parties, and even half-elves are just accepted—elves can be very supercilious when they choose to be. I saw even the various sorts of elves ignoring or otherwise being rude to each other. However, the mood is usually light or serene, and the owner and staff are moon elves, who welcome all. They will not allow anything to get too far out of hand.

If the elven patrons weren't such snobs, I'd give this place five full tankards. Go there to taste the food, if not to linger.

Proprietress: Yaereene Ilbaereth is the tavern's seemingly unaging proprietress. She is a tall, charming and regal elven woman with silvery eyes, who goes about with a grinning faerie dragon perched delicately on her shoulder.<sup>30</sup>

The Red-Eyed Owl

This is the closest thing Water-deep has to a "local" – a comfortable, unimpressive, welcoming gathering place for the neighborhood. It is the kind of place where friends will come in and hail each other across the room, the food and drink will be pleasant, if unspectacular, and you'll be allowed to sit in peace and while an evening away over a tankard or two.

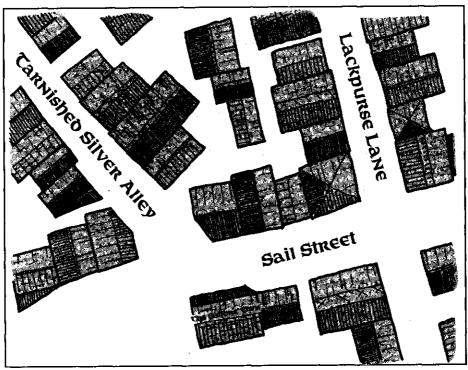
Food is a heavily spiced seafood stew (called coast chowder) or roast oxen done with a sweet-and-sour sauce and a dash of brandy to flame the outside as it's brought, blazing, to your table. Either way, it's 5 cp for a heaping platter or huge bowl (with huge slabs of fresh, warm crusty brown bread).

Drink is 1 cp/tankard for ale, 2 cp for bitters, 3 cp for stout, 4 cp/tallglass for zzar or red wine, and 5 cp for the rather sour white wine that is brought in from the proprietor's own land, and which he's inordinately fond of. It goes well with all sorts of cheese, though (especially the firmer, heartier sorts), and he sells it for carry-out at 2 sp/bottle or 1 gp for a half-anker keg.

The Owl faces west. It is a rambling old wooden building that looks as if it's about to fall

<sup>30</sup> Location #24 on the color map.





into the street. But it has looked that way for at least 40 winters, patrons assured me, and hasn't fallen down yet. It is the point of an arrowhead-shaped block bounded by Rainrun Street, the confluence of Gut Alley and Belnimbra's Street, Snail Street, and an unnamed alley.

Proprietor: Balarg "Twofists" Dathen, a bluff, bristle-bearded man with long, unkempt red hair, owns and runs the tavern. His rough voice is much used for coarse jests, and he has an unutterably deadly aim with a hurled platter or tankard when anyone tries to start trouble.<sup>31</sup>

The Sailors' Own

!!! 00

This dockside tavern stands on Sail Street, across from the mouth of Tarnished Silver Alley with water lapping at the docks only a few strides away. The reek of fish—and rotting seaweed—hangs strongly about the whole area. Inside the tavern, the sailors seem to be trying to blot it out with the smells of their various and often exotic tobaccos.

The place is low-beamed and crowded, with weary sailors slumped on benches playing at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Location #5 on the color map.



board games, cards, or merely getting thoroughly drunk. They are often left to sleep the night through here.

Anyone who's going to be sick is expected to make it out the dockside door first. Anyone who starts a fight will be thrown through that same door—luckily, it usually opens at the impact—by the proprietor, a man of prodigious strength. I saw him lift an entire table with one hand while he reached under it to snatch up a drunken sailor with the other! His aim and strength are sufficient to hurl a struggling brawler through the dockside door boots first—high enough to just clear the threshold and sail across the

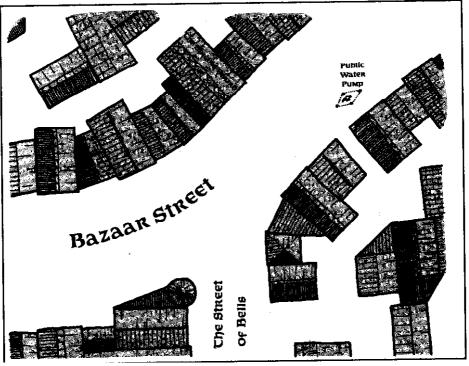
quayside beyond, straight into the water. It's worth a few coppers just to see this, but you don't want to be anywhere near when such trouble starts.

This place is just what its name implies. It belongs to the sailors, and they don't really want anyone else here. If you're not one, duck into it to avoid bad weather or thugs, but otherwise steer clear.

Interestingly, sailors here don't like to eat any sort of seafood—they get little else on long voyages, I suppose. The fare here is pork, ox, or horse, either in roast portions (2 cp/platter) or stewed with onions and greens (1 cp/bowl). Drink is ale (2 cp/tankard),







stout (3 cp/tankard), zzar or brandy (4 cp/tallglass), or whiskey (1 sp/tallglass). That's the entire menu.

This tavern has an interesting sideline. The proprietor sells charts (with an emphasis on nautical usefulness) of many areas along the Sword Coast and around the known Sea of Swords for 45 gp each and up. A good or rare one will run into the hundreds of gold pieces.

Proprietor: The proprietor, Guthlakh "Hands" Imyiir, is huge, slow, and deliberate. He is also very strong and slow to smile, but not surly by any means.<sup>32</sup>

# The Singing Sword

This busy tavern stands on the north side of Bazaar Street, at the head of the Street of Bells. Three floors of busy diners enjoy one of the largest menus in Water-deep, including the justly famous turtle soup-served in a turtle's upside-down shell—here each day. They are entertained by the high-voiced ballads of the wondrous magical blade for which the tavern is named.

This black-bladed long sword was brought to Waterdeep long

<sup>32</sup> Location #3 on the color map.

### TROLLSONG

### **Anonymous**

In a cave there lived an old troll His diet grisly, his manners droll. Many a youth he caught and ate, "Raw, with carrots—really great."

In a castle there lived a knight
His lance was long, his armor bright.
Many quests he carefully planned
But never went, his courage unmanned.

In a village there dwelt a maid The fairest that e'er the gods made. Poor but proud; she lived alone Beauty naught but skin and bone.

In a deep forest berries grew Bright and red, good but few. Hither went the lady fair Her savage hunger to repair.

In one sniff the troll knew The makings of a small meat stew Had wandered near his hidden home. To he who waits, all meals roam.

In a huff that knight so bold Rode out to spend grudging gold. For his cupboard was bare, ale low— And through the forest he did go.

In a trice, the lady found her food: Berries ripe, and berries good. By the handful she did eat. (The troll approached on nimble feet.)

Full, the maiden turned to go.
Out leaped the troll, crying, "So!
My dinner's come, in cap and gown!"
And the knight, unseeing, rode him down.

"Oh, my hero!" sighed the lady,
"My life is thine—marry me!"
The knight, afraid, backed his steed—
Hooves again treading troll mead.

"Good lady," stammered the warrior bold, "My sight is poor, my limbs are old.

Am I then thy only choice?"
"Yes," she cried, "And I rejoice!"

"Oh, dear," then said noble knight And fainted dead away from fright. Over backwards he did crash. His armor making troll hash.

"Oh, my lord!" cried the gentle maid.
"So noble, so modest, so gently made!"
And loving arms around him put,
Trampling troll cakes underfoot.

"What? Ho!" the dazed knight did moan.
"I am beaten and overthrown!
By my honor, I surrender me
To my foe the victory!"

And he struggled to one knee His conqueror bright to see— Beheld in wonder blushing maid. (Under both, troll tiles thinly laid.)

"I am yours! Command me, I beg!"
Quoth the knight, making a leg.
"Up then, sir!" said that lady
"My lord and husband thou shalt be!"

And up he got, armor a-clank, (Troll blood unwitting spurs drank), And set his lady upon his horse. Together they rode o'er troll—of course.

And when the hooves had died away, The troll on the ground did stay, Feeling every little bit of pain As his bits came together again.

But men, like trolls, never learn Beautiful maidens sharp to spurn, And so the song goes round again The fallen always suffering pain.

Oh, in a cave there lived an old troll . (Song repeats)



ago, and is thought to have been forged in ancient Netheril. It customarily stands upright, hilt uppermost, in the open central well of the tavern, encircled by the spiraling stairs to the upper floors, and is silent.

Once an hour, one of the tavern staff—usually a pretty girl in mock armor, struggling under the weight of the blade—lifts the blade and holds it high, for it will only sing when grasped and ordered. The will of the holder actually determines the songand angry or upset holders thoughts have been known to make the blade segue into a second song after it has begun singing.

The sword's magic has never failed yet. It seems immune to the effects of dispel magic — in fact, applying one when the blade is held by a living being causes it to snarl in anger and scorn! It seems to know 30 or so songs, mainly tragic ballads, love laments, or roaring warriors' songs, with a few comedy pieces thrown in. Its voice is high, clear, and almost bell-like on high notes, but somehow male-

though it has been known to mimic the voices of others who sing along with it in order to better harmonize.<sup>33</sup>

I've included the lyrics of *Trollsong*, a comedy ballad that seemed a special favorite of the patrons, so that you can sing along if you visit the Sword and not feel out of place. Everyone in the place roars and minces their way through this one, and bellows for it to be sung at least twice through each time.

The Sword has a simple way of dealing with prices: All meals are 1 gp per platter, whatever you order. This includes a tallglass or tankard of whatever you want. Subsequent drinks are 1 sp/tankard for any beer or 1 gp/tallglass for zzar or any wine. The exotic drinkables (elverquisst, dragonstongue, firewine, and Fires of Mirabar whiskey) are few or missing altogetherno surprise, at these prices.

Whenever I went, I found the Sword to be a lively place, brightly lit and full of crowds of folk enjoying their meal—and their visit with friends at adjacent tables. This is obviously a popu-

The Sword sings when it pleases. It performs for Gothmorgan because it likes him—and will use its extraordinary powers to elude anyone it doesn't want wielding it. It will only allow Gothmorgan, a good-aligned bard (or in an emergency, if Gothmorgan, his staff, or the tavern are threatened, anyone willing to wield it to defend them) to wield it. It may have other, as yet unknown, powers—and Elminster

believes it is of Netherese origin.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The Singing Sword is location #41 on the color map. The Singing Sword is a chaotic good, intelligent long sword +2, which has the extraordinary powers of levitation and teleportation (as detailed in the DUNGEON MASTER<sup>TM</sup> Guide, page 187). When wielded by a bard, it allows him or her to strike one extra attack with it per round, at an additional +2 attack bonus (so the attack roll is at +4, though the damage roll remains +2). It is immune to dispel magic, disintegrate and all lightning or electrical spells or magical effects, and confers this protection to its wielder and all within a 5′ radius. Such effects are drawn into the sword and harmlessly absorbed to sustain and renew its own magic.



lar place with many regulars. The food's good, too. Any visitor to Waterdeep will find this place worth a visit to hear the Singing Sword burst into song.

Proprietor: Gothmorgan Ilibuld, the proprietor, is tall, laconic, and always watchful, but ever the polite host.

# The Sleepy Sylph

This popular tavern stands at the southwest corner of the intersection of Rainrun and Snail Streets, at the other end of the same small block of buildings as the Red-Eyed Owl. Its frankly risque signboard depicts the sylph the tavern is named for.

But while the Owl is a cozy local watering hole, this place caters to visitors. Lots of colored *driftglobes* float about, and many scantily clad waitresses (wearing diaphanous robes and fairy wings of silken gauze stretched over fine wire) hurry about, dodging the strolling minstrels hired by the tavern.

Under the many-hued, drifting lights, patrons can eat almost nothing and drink as much as they can afford. Only skewered whole fowl—chicken, quail, turkey, or pheasant—are on the menu (1 gp each). Each fowl comes with a darkbread trencher and a plate of lemon slices that most patrons use to cut the

grease from their fingers after eating the fowl.

Drink is 3 cp/tankard for ale, 5 cp for bitters, 7 cp for stout, 1 sp/ tallglass for zzar or house red or white wine, and 2 gp to 25 gp by the bottle for more exotic things. Locals in the neighborhood no doubt come here for a single drink, to enjoy the music and to watch the waitresses—and then go to the Owl, just steps away to eat and drink at about a third the price. (I saw more than watching going on, but turned modestly back to my glass, which was practically sobbing to have more little drinks poured into it.)

For the money, though, you get spotless white tablecloths, good food brought to you in a hurry, music, and a chance to see other rich folk dining. If you aren't rich, why are you here?

Proprietor: The owner and operator of the Sleepy Sylph is Callanter Rollingshoulder, a tall, fat man dressed in dark silken robes and a red Calishite sash, with the bushy ends of his truly magnificent mustache adorned with tiny, golden, chiming bells.<sup>3</sup>

### INNS

The Jade Jug

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On the northwest corner of the intersection of the High Road and Waterdeep Way stands what

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Location #6 on the color map.



has been called Waterdeep's plushest inn. It deserves its prime location—many noble families would envy the spotless, luxurious accommodations. Every detail, from handsoap bowls beside the piped-water baths, within easy reach of a reclining bather, to the bedside icebox filled with shrimp snacks and chilled wine, has been thought of. Guests are attended by a personal servant of their choice for the duration of their stay from those not presently engaged with another customer. Their every need is attended to: Food is brought, a coach (or, in icy winter weather, a sledge) is brought around if the guest wishes to go out in the city, and anything a guest gets dirty is instantly whisked away and replaced with a clean duplicate.

Decor is muted, not garish or in bad taste (unlike the Unicorn's Horn across the way). Quite simply I felt like a pampered king during my one-night stay. But with rooms 12 gp to 30 gp/night and suites 25 gp to 50 gp, one night was simply all I could hope to afford!

Until you've been bathed by a cheerful, skillful, beautiful maid who wears white gloves as she soaps you, you haven't lived. If you've gold enough, go to the

Jade Jug. I'll never sneer at pampering again.

Proprietress: The charming, beautiful, one-armed hostess is Amaratha Ruendarr. She notices every detail, and remembers the names of guests' pets, children, or mates from their last visit, a year or more ago!<sup>35</sup>

# The Pampered Traveler

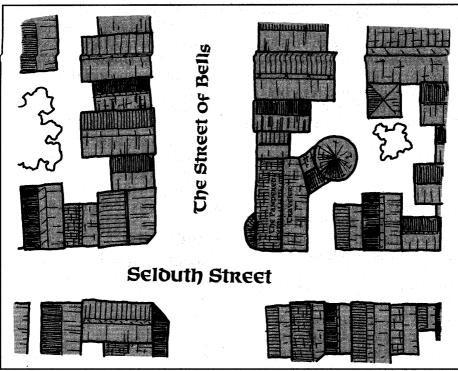
This inn, with large, conical-roofed, many-windowed turrets at its either end, stands like an exotic castle, dark and somehow inviting, on the northeast corner of the meeting of Selduth Street and the Street of Bells. Room rates here run from 6 gp to 12 gp/night, depending on the room you choose.

The Pampered Traveler's name sets high expectations, and they are not disappointed. Servants conduct you to your large and well-furnished rooms, which are kept warm but not overwarm, and come within breaths if you ring for them. Each room has a bell pull by the door.

On the main floor is a huge smoking room with a roaring hearth full of old, soft, vast armchairs that can easily swallow up smaller visitors, a playnursery for the children of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Location #35 on the color map. Volo had a last-minute thought about the Jug. He recommends that merchants with gold enough to bring their mate to Waterdeep once a year for a week's shopping and sightseeing save the Jug for the last night. Have the house staff pack all your purchases for the journey and engage a coach to take you to your transportation home, while you relax and let your personal servants pamper you! Bliss!





guests (a rare and thoughtful feature), a gaming room, and three small, private meeting rooms for the use of guests. There is also, surprisingly, a library filled with books handcopied by the staff and a reading table with a glass top, under which can be seen as full and complete a map of the known Realms as far west as the Moonshaes, as far east as Thay, and as far south as the Shaar, as I've seen anywhere. (The staff spends one morning a week, each, on the task of hand-copying the books.)

The proprietor is keenly interested in exploration. Present in the library along with a

chapbook put out by the Merchants' League describing the exploits of the famous Dabron Sashenstar and his mapping of a trade route linking known lands to Sossal, there are even copied letters from sea captains who have reached Maztica, far away across the sea.

All of the guests are welcome to read—though I get the feeling anyone who departed with as much as a single page would be pursued by the master of the house until he separated the thief from his head! I have also heard of a man staying free at the inn for a week in exchange for gifting the proprietor with a



particular highly valued book.

When I cautiously discussed reading matter with the master, he said the only things he didn't want in his library were magical texts. They intrigued him, but they also brought potential danger into his inn and attracted the wrong sort of readers. Twice he had to break down the doors of his library and put out fires—and once run pell-mell through the streets to Blackstaff Tower to call on Khelben Arunsun himself to come and bind a summoned abishai baatezu!

Most of the staff are middleaged, motherly, pleasant women ("Young, pretty ones bring only trouble," the master told me). They do a good job of cleaning up after messy guests as they go along and of bringing wine, hot cider, ale or stout to guests upon request. (These drinks are included in your room price).

In the morning, there's complimentary hot egg, vegetable, and beef broth soup (better than it sounds), and each evening guests are welcome to come down to the common rooms and cut themselves slices of beef, goat, venison, or pork from the sideboard platters. Mustards, pickles, horseradish, and hot southern sauces are on hand to garnish the meat. All of this is included in your room fee—but if you bring in your own guests (who are not staying at the inn) to dine with

you, their fare costs you an additional 1 gp/meal per head.

All in all, a quietly luxurious place to stay. This is undoubtedly the wealthy scholar's choice of hostel.

Proprietor: The Pampered Traveler is run by Brathan Zilmer, guildmaster of the Fellowship of Innkeepers. He is a solemn, careful, darkly handsome man with an air of mystery and wariness about him.<sup>36</sup>

### Festhalls

Mother Tathlorn's House of Pleasure and Healing Festhall & Spa

This is the most famous house of pleasure in Waterdeep, and that's not surprising. Located on Gem Street, just off Waterdeep Way, and across from the foot of the road down from the Grain Gate of Castle Waterdeep, it's a large, five-floored building with two additional levels of dungeons below ground, in which absolutely no expense has been spared on props.

There are wardrobes full of all sorts of clothes, from silk and lace nightdresses to pirate outfits, full plate armor (made of silverpainted padding, to lessen injuries), and barbarian berserker garb. There are several rooms full of jungle plants, with heated

<sup>36</sup>Location #40 on the color map.



pools in them and carefully tended mossy banks. There are four-poster beds with trampolines and rings that can be set aflame. There are even pairs of rings of levitation to be used in rooms with *glowing globes* and floating mirrors. If you can think of it, someone already has, and it can be found here.

The strength of any festhall, however, lies in its staff, who must be skilled and must enjoy their work. The men and women in this festhall are experts. (Mother Tathlorn owns another festhall—she won't reveal which one—in which staff are trained on the job. They don't get to work here until they are skilled at

their craft.)

Mother Tathlorn's has on staff several priests of Sune. In return for offerings to the goddess, they heal torn muscles and sprained limbs. Almost all of the rest of the staff are trained and capable masseuses—and in fact, the most popular service performed at Mother Tathlorn's is massage and bathing, especially of elderly male and female citizens of Waterdeep who are wealthy enough to afford it—either daily or whenever they can muster coins enough.

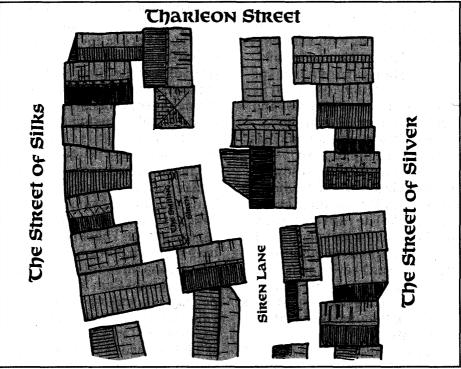
Here in warm, cozy, private comfort, your aches and pains can be soothed away in a scented or mineral water bath or in heated steam baths, and you can drift off to contented slumber,

secure in the knowledge that your person and well-guarded belongings are safe. Or, you can visit with a friend, or even strangers, while all of you are massaged. Unlike in some other realms, in Waterdeep there's nothing embarrassing about going to a festhall. It's simply part of life for those who enjoy it.

There are two privacy floors, where staff and the many doors, hangings, dim lighting and secret passages make sure patrons don't see each other. These floors also have separate entrances via tunnels into an adjacent building to the west on Gem Street, so that patrons who demand discretion won't be seen entering or leaving. Mother Tathlorn also has six skilled bouncers—one a wizard armed with a wand of paralyzation and silence spells—for patrons who become difficult.

All of this luxury and pleasure doesn't come cheaply. Expect to spend 4 gp at the door, plus 25 gp per staff person who assists you. Patrons who don't pay the full shot when they depart must leave collateral. Lacking collateral, they must go home with only a thin cloak and the keys to their lodgings (a practice that affords the Watch much innocent amusement—especially on snowy nights). Most regular patrons run a credit account but also tip staff members very handsomely, often effectively doubling their fee.





*Proprietress:* The festhall's prioprietress, Mother Tathlorn, is old and stout, but charming. She is skilled at massage and in reading the needs of a customer who is shy, drunk, or unfamiliar with the common tongue.<sup>37</sup>

The Smiling Siren Nightclub & Theater

This large, but plain-looking, stone and mudbrick building

stands in the center of a block of shops and apartments, in the fork of its own access street, Siren Lane. It's home to a company of popular local actors who can perform everything from rowdy comedy (their stock in trade) to high tragedy.

Nobles often hire the place for an evening for exclusive performances involving the actors and actresses saying and doing what the noble always wanted them to in a particular play rather than

37 Location #12 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Location#31on the color map.Whenthehauntedtheaterfeaturedin the *Knight of the Living Dead* adventure gamebook closed, the traveling troupes came here instead. (See #42A in that book. The haunted theater was on the south side of Waterdeep Way, the third building west of Fellowship Hall). That theater has been closed for over five winters now, and has become known as the Hall of the Juggling Ghost. It was previously Raeral's Splendors.



the way it was written. Such private performances of ten involve risque audience participation or private jokes—or even entirely new (sometimes wretched) plays, written by the noble who's hired the company.

More often, however, the Siren is home to traveling troupes of vaudeville jugglers, comedians, and nearly nude dancers or burlesque dancers. When these aren't available, the theater company performs—usually a weekly revue consisting of time-honored gag routines and sketches rewritten to include references to daily happenings and current jokes.

Admission varies from 4 cp/ head to 6 gp/head, depending on who or what is performing. Famous bards are the most expensive—and fastest sellout draws. The take is split evenly between theater and performers. The theater in all cases provides heating via warm flue pipes fed by a hearth under the stage, lighting (usually glowing globes) and security. Most traveling troupes charge from 2 sp to 8 sp/ head (1 gp/head if burlesque dancers are involved). The weekly revue put on by the locals is always 4 cp.

Before and between performances, the place is used for drinking and dancing to live music, sometimes with show dancers on the stage. Ale is 3 cp per tankard, stout is 6 cp, and

zzar or wine is sold by the bottle, at 7 sp each.

Proprietor: Perendel Wintamer, a young, earnest, mustachioed mage, runs this nightclub. He often must use his spells to clear birds out of the dark upper reaches of the building.

# Alleys

Castle Ward's alleys are among the safest in the city. Since most folk of importance travel about with bodyguards or friends, thieves aren't in the habit of making strikes in this ward. The most frequent users of the alleys by day are tradesmen making deliveries. By night they are used most often by city watch or city guard patrols hurrying from this place to that.

Many of the so-called alleys in this ward have long since become proper streets, such as Coin Alley and Tarnished Silver Alley, and are not included here.

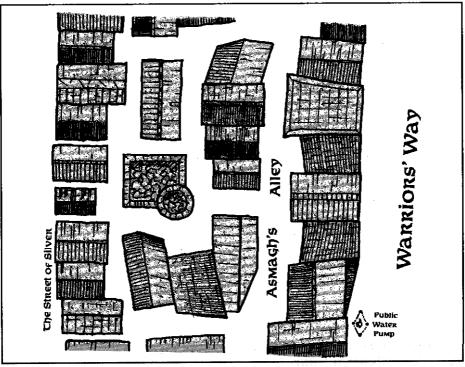
## Asmagh's Alley



Running south off Selduth Street through the interior of the long city block between the Street of Silver and Warriors' Way, this long, winding alley is considered to end when it meets Palfrey Lane to the south.

It is named for a notorious apothecary who flourished (if that's the word) in Waterdeep





some 60 winters ago. He was a poisoner, and buried his victims by night, lifting the stones of this alley to place them underneath and carrying away the dirt left over in his cart. After he was discovered at it and slain, the Watch uncovered over 80 bodies under these flagstones, and searched diligently to be sure they missed none. It's an old Waterdhavian joke to refer to Asmagh as "the Ambassador" because, they say "He welcomed so many folk to the City" ("the City" to a citizen of Waterdeep, means the City of the Dead).

Today, this long way is crowded with delivery crates, barrels,

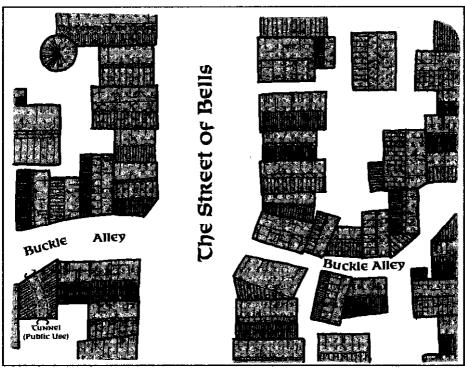
scattered garbage, and rats. Thugs sometimes mug folk here on the darker nights, trusting to the length of the alley to run down prey. Sometimes they even scatter marbles, beforehand, so their fleeing prey is sure to take a nasty fall.

### **Buckle Alley**

B

This narrow passage winds east and westward across four city blocks, from the High Road in the east to the heart of the block west of the Street of Silver at its other end. It lies about a third of the way south from Selduth Street to





Waterdeep Way and has always been a busy thoroughfare used by carters, tradesmen making deliveries, and local folk on foot.

It is named for an old saying. City guardsmen were told to buckle on their blades before they set foot in it, as it was once the heart of Thieves' Guild territory, before that organization was driven out of Waterdeep.

Of old, thieves used to sit on stools in this alley drinking, drawn swords laid naked across their laps in case the city watch showed up. Their favorite tipple was Black Grog Ale, from the pirate isles of the Sea of Fallen Stars. That brew is still a favorite in this area today. Barrels of it are imported all the way from Immurk's Hold for the locals to buy here, or to consume at local tayerns.

# Cat Alley, a.k.a. Cats Alley

Winding through the interior of the city block bounded by Waterdeep Way, the High Road, Buckle Alley and the Street of Bells, this narrow passage has many confusing twists and turns. Many a visitor to the city has become lost in its mud and dark corners. Deliveries are made here, and



there are rows of apartments and warehouses that stand in the interior of the block and can only be reached by means of this alley. Traditionally, gangs of street youths have battled for control of this many-branched passage, but in recent years, heavy city watch patrols have ended the wildest turf battles and made this a fairly safe place to walk.

Recently however, a masked, rapier-wielding, quietly chuckling assailant has made this a dangerous place for women after dark. By his dress and manner he is wealthy and probably noble, but he has not yet been apprehended, and has cut away a lot of female garments,

frightened a lot of folk, and caused at least two deaths: one lady who couldn't escape him and was found run through, and a would-be rescuer was killed on another occasion. The chuckling masked man calmly cut the rescuer's throat, and then strolled away, leaving the lady he had trapped untouched.

#### The Cat's Tail



The southernmost loop of Cat Alley, this passage runs behind two guildhalls, the Blue Jack tavern, and the Jade Jug, whose stables stand across it. The influence of the money and power





vested here has caused this alley to be brightly lit by glowing *globes* by night that are firmly fixed in high wall brackets and on roof overhangs and patrolled by private guards, who are armed with warning horns, clubs, and daggers. Patrons from the Jack have been known to aid these guards when they sound their horns—and as a result, the masked assailant who haunts Cat Alley keeps clear of this southern loop, and thieves are few indeed. The guards like to gossip about events in the city and for a copper piece or two will even recommend taverns, shops, inns, certain folk, festhalls - and even fences.

Duir's Alley

This alleyway enters the city block bounded by the Street of Bells, the Street of the Sword, Waterdeep Way and Selduth Street on its east side, just beside (to the north of) the Halls of Hilmer. It forks, going north and south past Hilmer's two metals warehouses to run down the west side of the interior of the block. The alleyway branching off to run down the eastern interior of the block is called Lhoril's Alley.

Today, this busy, winding

passage is often the scene of spell demonstrations and practice, as patrons or staff spill out of the rear of the Elfstone Tavern and unleash magic down the alley – sometimes to the vast surprise of someone coming along it!

More than once, visitors to Waterdeep coming to the apartments in the center of this block after dark have been astonished to find two or more elves chatting, wineglasses in hand, as they float in midair, surrounded by a glowing nimbus of blue light. The elves generally ignore such passersby – but if someone stops and is obviously listening, they have been known to drive the eavesdropper away with spells.

#### Elsambul's Lane

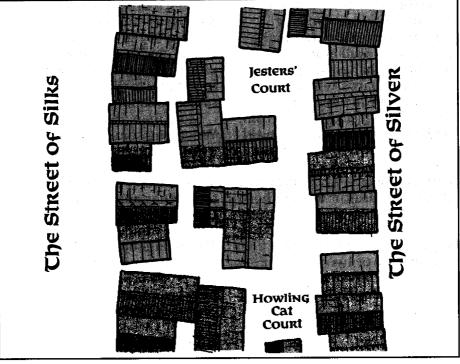


This short alleyway runs up and down the interior of the city block bounded by Bazaar Street, the Street of the Sword, Cymbril's Walk, and Warriors' Way. It is crossed, and most easily reached, by Lamp Street.

Elsambul was a priest of Mask, who lived somewhere along this alley over 70 winters ago. He held the view that thieves should not be crude snatch-and-grab thugs, but a deft, subtle brotherhood of organized companions. He began to gather a band under his

The city watch and guard will respond to these in 1d4+1 minutes.
 Consider these guards as F1s with 8 hp each. They patrol in groups of five, the leader being an F2 with a short sword and 18 hp. Fences are listed on pages 31-32 of Waterdeep and the North.





leadership, but was betrayed by an underling. He fell fighting defiantly here, using his magic to take as many foes as, possible with him—a defiant last stand that left the alley red with blood and strewn with bodies (or parts of bodies), local tavern tales attest.

Elsambul began the practice of writing cryptic messages for his gang along the walls of this lane, and this graffiti writing has been taken up by others. It is absent from almost everywhere else in Waterdeep. Today, the visitor can see some amusing, puzzling, and disgusting messages from one Waterdhavian to another (most of them unattributed).

Many of the messages hint at treasure to be won, dragons to be duped or destroyed, and great adventure. Others promise revenge or that something will not be forgotten. Adventures should find them intriguing—and perhaps even useful.

It helps to be a confident adventurer just to go into this alley. You never know just who (or what—I'm sure I saw purple tentacles under that hood!) you may find reading the messages.

**Howling Cat Court** 

This small open space inside a city



block (west of the Street of Silver and east of the Street of Silks, and south of Selduth Street) is infamous as a clandestine meeting place for ladies of the evening and their clients, street gangs, and others. Thieves lurk here, too. The city watch comes here often, frequently in triple patrol strength—because they never know just who they'll find here. Once it was a dozen angry heavily armed minotaurs, released from magical stasis by an evil mage!

Jesters' Court

This famous local landmark and meeting place lies north of Howling Cat Court, just south of Selduth Street in the same block. It's a large courtyard used by ladies of the evening and by minstrels (sometimes both are the same person, as with the famous Masked Minstrel). Sometimes on warm summer evenings it becomes an improvised dance court for the locals, lit by faerie fire or dancing lights conjured by a mage or apprentice.

Of old, jugglers and comics used to perform here for thrown coins (hence its name), but none are left now but a few men too old to perform. They sometimes come here of afternoons to just stand and remember.

By night, trouble in Howling Cat Court tends to spill over into

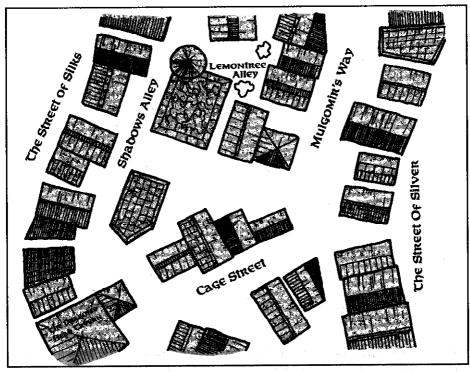
here, too—and more than once warring gangs, bands of thieves, or adventuring groups have drawn steel and had it out here, until bodies were slumped on the cobbles and the shouts, screams, and clangor and skirl of blades brought both the watch and the city guard on the run. By Waterdhavian legend, it's also the place for couples in love to meet before eloping.

# Lemontree Alley

Opening off Shadows Alley north of Cage Street in the first block of buildings east of Piergeiron's Palace, this tiny threelegged passage is crowded with the lemon trees for which it is named. Brought here by a local wizard, whose spells give heat enough to keep them alive, these tropical trees are an unexpected delight. Waterdeep is much too cold for them to survive under normal conditions. Those who are tempted to take fruit from the trees, break a branch off, or just take a swing at one of them, are warned that the wizard, Narthindlar of the Nine Spells, has set a guardian monster on these trees: a bear (a monster zombie) that usually sits quietly under one of the trees. If you harm or take from a tree, it rises up and drives you away.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> See Volume 1 of the Monstrous Compendium under "Zombie." The bear will not leave the trees, but will fight until destroyed or until offenders leave the vicinity.





Narthindlar has provided benches under the trees, and can sometimes be found sitting on one of them, puffing on a pipe and contemplating life, Faerun, and magic. He smokes tobacco into which cherries have been crushed, and it gives off a delightful odor. Diplomats who need to blow off steam or chat away from prying ears in the palace some times find their way here, too.

# Lhoril's Alley

B

This winding passage links Duir's Alley with Waterdeep Way, running down the eastern

interior of the city block bounded by the Way and by the Street of Bells, Buckle Alley, and the Street of the Sword. By day, it's a busy delivery area and garbage-piling place.

Named for the sorceress who met her death here, battling tanar'ri summoned by an overambitious apprentice, this passage is known to be haunted by the phantom sounds of running, staggering footsteps (origin unknown). They can be heard at any time of day hurrying northwards from Waterdeep Way as if a man or heavily laden woman in boots was fleeing frantically with their last, failing energy. No





breathing is ever heard, and no magic or barrier seems to silence or stop this phantom—nor does it respond to the calls or actions of living beings.

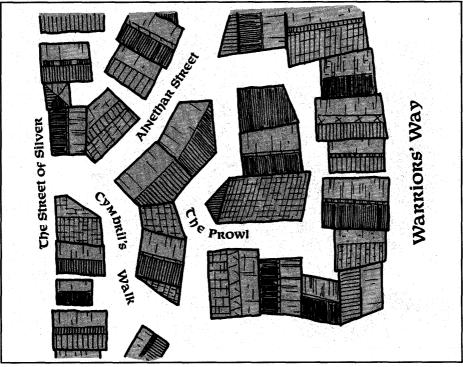
The Prowl

This short alley loops eastwards off Alnethar Street, and also, by a side spur, links up with Cymbril's Walk to the south. It provides rear access to a row of shops and to a row of apartments that stand in the center of the block. The Prowl is named for the acts of an eccentric nobleman who used to loose his pet panthers to stalk around it, terrorizing the neigh-

borhood (until one of the cats grew exasperated—or just hungry—one day and ate him). This otherwise unimportant alleyway is the favorite hunting ground of a pair of skeletal hands that strangle folk from behind, leaving wither-scars graven deep into victims' throats where each finger has been. Some folk who have glanced into the alley at night but not entered have reported seeing two points of light close together in the air, like floating glowing eyes.

This frightening killer doesn't strike often—four times a year, at most—and seems adept at evading detection whenever powerful wizards and priests come





looking for it. No one is yet sure what it is—let alone how to destroy it. It only seems to be active in the hours of darkness, and never strikes at folk in buildings, but only out in the alleyway. I recommend visitors avoid this area until news comes that this mysterious menace has been destroyed.

The Reach

This short side way runs north-

west off Lackpurse Lane to the west of Dretch Lane, climbing a steep slope to reach a cluster of warehouses—including Crommor's Warehouse.<sup>43</sup>

It's named after the nautical term reach, and got the name after a group of sailors watched a companion, in icy winter weather, come out of one warehouse and slide—quickly and helplessly, arms windmilling just to stay upright—down it and across Lackpurse Lane into the buildings beyond, where he

<sup>43</sup>Location #2 on the color map. See also *Waterdeep and the North* page 32. Two of the men you'll encounter here, Elminster tells us, fence stolen goods.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Elminster believes that the skeletal hands are undead—specifically a wichtlin, a being almost always encountered only on another world, Krynn (see MC4, the *DRAGONLANCE® Appendix*). He stresses he's guessing from descriptions he's heard and hasn't investigated this personally.



fetched up against a wall of crates with the inevitable crash.

It's a popular place for sailors to hang out these days, telling yarns of their lives at sea and looking for trouble. Don't approach unless you're looking for a fight—which is what I watched a trio of adventurers do, one evening, deliberately starting a brawl so they could smash heads against walls, hurl sailors down into Lackpurse Lane, and generally send teeth flying.

### Sevenlamps Cut

This short cut-through links Swords Street and the Street of Silks, just south of Selduth Street. The alley is named for the seven ornate, everburning, magical lamps installed here long ago by a now-forgotten mage (some say Ahghairon himself).

This handy passage is not only safe and well-lit, it is a popular destination, day and night—for by some tradition whose origins are also now forgotten, this is the place where apprentice (not yet members of the Watchful Order, or visiting) wizards and starving or wandering underpriests in need of money gather to offer their services at spellcasting in return for coin. They cluster here in tiny knots of three and four, waiting for a chance to demonstrate their Art.

Wounded men have been

known to stagger and crawl here after tavern brawls, leaving a trail of blood and hoping to buy healing—if they make it. This is the place to hire a spellcaster for a few days' aid if you're about to brave Undermountain's depths—or to have a curse removed or your friend who's been cruelly polymorphed into a pink frog changed back into his rightful form.

# Shadows Alley

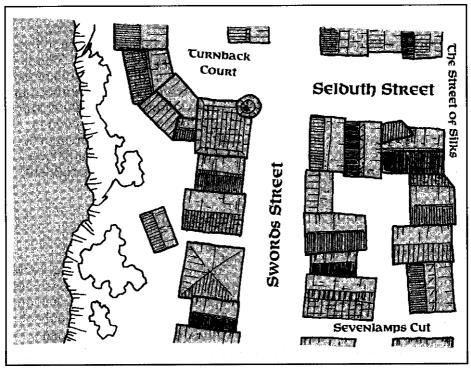
B

This long passage links the back doors of shops, grand homes, and apartments that face Piergeiron's Palace along the eastern side of the Street of Silks with Cage Street, Lemontree Alley, and Mulgomir's Way.

It's named for the undead that haunted it in earlier days, before a determined effort was made to root them out and destroy them (and block the sewer connection they retreated into, when priests came looking for them).

No shadows have been seen in Shadows Alley for almost 20 winters now, and today the alley is known more as a way for important visitors to the city and wealthy merchants to slip out of their lodgings and go in search of nighttime companionship and revelry without being seen. It is also known for the (illegal) duels often fought at night here by diplomats or young nobles who





both think they'll win, and want to leave the body of their fallen foe contemptuously on the palace steps—or throw it into the spell defenses of Ahghairon's Tower, so as to confuse any detection magics used on it to determine who the killer was or to impair attempts at resurrection. In many such duels, magical cheating goes on—one or both parties employs hidden magic items or weapons—and such a release of Art almost always alerts city guard duty wizards at the palace and causes general mayhem as wizards and warriors rush towards the alley from various nearby barracks and guardposts.

#### TurnbackCourt

This westernmost extension of Selduth Street is a short stub that allows access to a few buildings nestled against the eastern cliff face of Mount Waterdeep. The reason for its name is obvious. Lit by bright lamps by night, it is a rallying point for city watch and city guard patrols.

The large building that walls off the north side of the Court, hidden from the view of most who pass on Swords Street by the bend in Turnback Court, is a warehouse that, I'm told, is owned by a mysterious organiza-



tion—the Harpers, perhaps, or the Red Sashes, or an arm of the Lords' Alliance, or maybe a cabal of wizards—and holds hidden a number of items of powerful magic, including (several locals whispered to me, on separate occasions) a small ship, that sails the sky instead of water!44 When I tried to investigate, I was politely told to be on my way or Piergeiron would have gained one over-inquisitive visitor to put onto a convict ship and send far, far away!

## Zeldan's Alley

This narrow winding way runs south from the Crawling Spider tavern, along whose south wall it connects with the Street of the Sword, past a pleasant little well of safe drinking water shaded by trees to circle around the southern interior of the city block bounded by the Street of the Sword, Waterdeep Way, Warriors' Way, and Buckle Alley Along the way, it offers back door access to the Golden Key and other shops, townhomes, and apartments.

Zeldan was a short, puffing merchant who was a devout worshipper of Gond. He finally met his doom some 30 winters ago in the arms of an automaton that came to life too soon and too vigorously and smashed him

through a wall it was supposed to raise him gently up to paint!

Unfortunately for all concerned, Zeldan built most of the warehouses and townhomes that fill the center of this block—and under cover of the construction, spent much of his fortune sponsoring priests of Gond who came to Waterdeep on ships from Lantan to build and install various experimental devices in this alleyway. Some of them still lurk, hidden beneath paving stones and behind walls, waiting tor the unwary to trigger them. Some are harmless or do nothing more than make grinding noises and lurching movements (they were either faulty designs or have broken since installation) – but some are mechanical traps and killing devices that rank right up there with the most horrible killing devices that rich fiends in Thay and Calimshan have devised! A few still pop up from time to time, frightening, crippling, or slaying outright the folk who discover them. Be warned—and avoid this alleyway unless unavoidable business takes you there.



<sup>44</sup> When asked about this, Elminster merely smiled like an old fox just leaving a chicken coop, with feathers still stuck to its lips and said, "No comment" (a phrase I know he didn't pick up on Faerun).







# Sea Ward



ea Ward is the wealthiest ward of the city. This district lies north of Julthoon Street and

west of Shield Street, with a small eastern arm extending to the High Road along Vondil Street. Lashed by sea storms, it is almost deserted in winter, but in warmer months is home to most of Waterdeep's noble families, who play here with as much gusto as they do on their own estates.

The major avenue of this ward is the Street of the Singing Dolphin. The ward is notable not only for the many-spired and grand homes of the nobles, but for containing the majority of the city's temples, which soar every bit as grand and haughty as the nobles' homes. Other notable landmarks include the Field of Triumph (a vast open stadium), the lush Heroes' Gardens (Waterdeep's only public parkland outside the City of the Dead), and West Gate, which leads onto the beaches where folk of strong hearts and tough skins brave the chilly waters whenever winter ice sculptures don't block access to the waves of the Sea of

Swords. Be sure to see the Lion Gate, the impressive carved entrance to the Field of Triumph, facing Gulzindar Street.

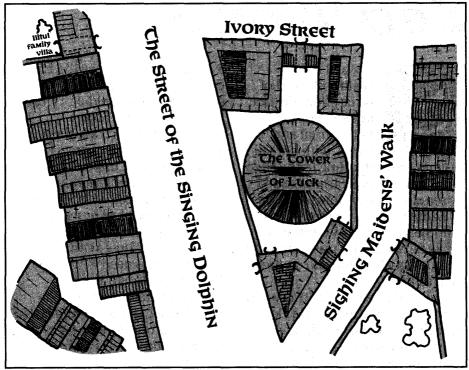
Also in this ward are the towers and works of many powerful wizards. Folk of importance who want to build opulent homes come here. Those with less snobbery and more lust or need for everyday power can be found in Castle Ward. Those with less money or less need to impress can be found in North Ward.

Truth to tell, except for the fading smell of the sea and lack of temples as one goes east, the visitor can see little difference between North Ward and Sea Ward. Nonetheless, the visitor should remember that the most pushy of Waterdeeps wealthier merchants crowd into the best addresses they can find in this ward. Some Waterdhavians devote their entire lives to attaining a Sea Ward address. Though citizens may joke about this social climbing, the visitor would do well to avoid talking on such sensitive things.

Watch patrols are very frequent. However, they are always polite and generally lightly armed? Street violence, theft, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>One correction for the maps in both FR1 *Waterdeep and the North* and the *City System* boxed set: the Tesper noble family is shown as owning two villas, #87 and #89. The more southerly villa, #87, is actually the seat of the Eagleshield noble family, who, Elminster says, appreciate our help in restoring their rightful recognition. Its floor plan, still mistakenly attributed to the wrong family, appears on Map 4 of the *City System* boxed set.





vandalism of any sort is not tolerated in this ward. Unless welldressed or a known Waterdhavian noble, and drunk, those who engage in such things are quickly handled by the city watch.

### Landmarks

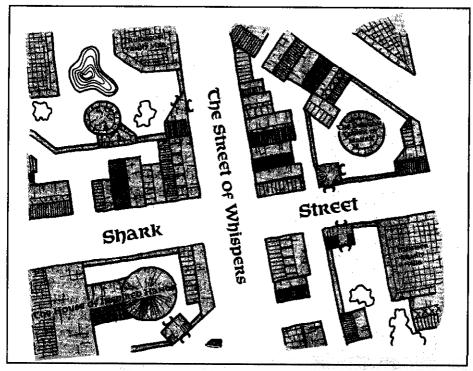
Many visitors to the city if they can find good weather and time enough, go for a stroll in Sea Ward just to gawk at the griffons and other steeds being flown overhead, the proud architecture all around, and the wasteful display of wealth everywhere. The walk is apt to be thirsty There are very few taverns in this ward. Inns stand thin on the ground here, too—and there are no guildhalls at all.

In evening, the setting sun blazes on many gilded domes and spires here. More ornamental things such as minarets, bell

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> City watch patrols are detailed on page 17 of *Waterdeep and the North*. In this ward, four-sword patrols pass a given point about every 10 minutes and look in to a tavern or inn dining room every 30 minutes.

As detailed on pages 16-17 and 23 of the *City System* set booklet, six-man detachments of the city guard also patrol the ward. Typical patrol details are as given therein, on page 23. Reinforcements will be a dozen LG hm F3s to F6s clad in chain mail and armed with maces, long swords, daggers, slings, and a polearm. Guard patrols pass a given street location about every 30 minutes, but appear 1d4 minutes after a city watch patrol blows a warning horn in this ward.





arches, and statuary crowd this ward than other areas of the city.

As in North Ward, most nobles' homes are behind walls, but most of the walled temple complexes welcome visitors—even those of other faiths, so long as they offer no blasphemy and make offerings to the gods. The largest temple is the House of Heroes, dedicated to Tempus. It stands just north of the Field of Triumph stadium, and is rivaled in size by the Tower of Luck, the temple of Tymora. In Waterdeep, these two vie with the Spires of the Morning—the temple to Lathander located in Castle Ward just south of the stadium –

and with the up-and-coming temple to Gond, the House of Inspired Hands.

The faith of Selune has always been important in the port city of Waterdeep, and the House of the Moon can be found off Diamond Street in Sea Ward. The city's wealth is demonstrated by its support for a walled and forested shrine to Silvanus and two mighty temples that could not flourish in smaller centers: the House of Wonder, dedicated to Midnight (formerly to Mystra), and the Temple of Beauty given to the worship of Sune.<sup>3</sup>

Walled but less welcoming are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Locations and clergy of these temples are found on page 29 of Waterdeep and the North.





the wizards' towers that rise in this ward: the Dragon Tower of Maaril, about which so many sinister tales are whispered; Naingate, abode of the famous adventuring mage Nain, once of the Company of Crazed Venturers; and Tessalar's Tower.<sup>4</sup>

There is also a strange sort of obstacle course, established by a crazed wizard to test the greedy the venturesome, and others who wander into it. Known as the Blue Alley, this magical death trap is entered by either one of two blue-tiled passages that run into a large, windowless stone building on the north side of Ivory Street, just east of its meeting with Sighing Maidens' Walk. Vast treasure is said to wait there for any who can take it, but from what I heard, the place is studded with inescapable traps that claim almost all who enter, like those found in the wilder tales of dungeon exploration. Look down the alley as I did – but be very sure of your favor with the gods before you step farther.

<sup>4</sup>On the color map, the Dragon Tower is #63, Naingate is #73,andTessalar's Tower is #95. Chapter 7 of that work also details the three mages who own these homes and some of the strange magical features of the Dragon Tower can be found in the *Knight* 

of the Living Dead adventure gamebook.

Maaril has turned to evil, and his tower, sculpted in the shape of a rampant dragon, is a place that citizens of Waterdeep warn visitors away from. They say its steps lead up to chambers and winding stairs adorned with many trapped, enchanted creatures set as guardians and in torment. The steps also lead down to cellars where there are magical pools that speak and whose waters confer magical powers on those touching them—or dissolve flesh, bone, metal, and all in a moment of smoke!

The wraiths of Maaril's young female apprentices, their lives drained by his evil magic, wander the tower, attacking intruders. Everywhere lurks a webwork of Maaril's waiting, terrible spells. The

unwitting can trigger their own doom with a single wrong step.

Maaril is said to ride dragons, to call them from the dragon's mouth balcony at the top of the tower—and to experiment with hatchlings, creating fearsome dragonet monsters.

Elminster confirmed that these things are true, but added dryly that, "It's just a stage he's going through. Know ye: Maaril will either grow up or be destroyed by the things he's playing with. If ye run afoul of him, thy best defense is that he's only about a tenth as powerful or as smart as he thinks he is."

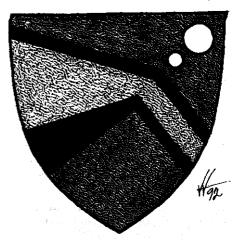


# Tespengates

The Waterdhavian noble family of Tesper uses its walled city villa to host parties – parties even common folk and outlanders are welcome to attend. The Tespers have an almost insatiable hunger for live music and the willing company of strangers who enjoy wrestling and other body contact sports. They host one all-night gathering every tenday. Rousing ball games and impromptu wrestling tournaments abound, with not a few bumps and bruises to the participants. To make sure that no one goes away in bad spirits, a 5 gp purse is presented to the best player.

The food tends to be simple—roast fowl, usually—but the ale and zzar flow freely. The only reason the common folk don't crowd into the villa until a guest couldn't breathe, let alone take a step in any direction, is that Tespergates is—haunted.

This keeps most Waterdhavians away. Everyone in the city has heard the tragic tale of the Tesper sisters, Silpara and Yulhymbra, who grew up playing with elven friends and proved to have a mastery of magic. Unfortunately their family hated and feared magic at the time (this



occurred four generations ago). When this was revealed, they were ostracized, and the two sisters were soon slain by assassins sent by a younger brother, who feared they might use their Art to rule the family.

Their ghosts still haunt the house, drifting about its chambers and passages as silent but seemingly intelligent phantoms. If angered, they cast spells that create spectacular images and sounds, but do nothing more than attract attention. They are now considered to be both amusing party entertainment and a sort of household warning system, alerting the family to thieves, vandals, and crimes done in their halls.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>The villa is #89 on the color map and the City System map. Map location #87, mistakenly labeled as a Tesper villa, is actually that of the Eagleshield noble family.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster reveals that a Harper mage, Nleera Tarannath, has been impersonating one of the ghosts for a year or so. This gives her a chance to pass on messages to Harpers at the parties—messages adventurers might well overhear and get drawn into an adventure. The ghosts seem to tolerate and even aid Nleera in her imposture.



# The Fiery Flagon

Tavern

# !!!! 000

This odd, cramped place stands on the west side of Seawatch Street, across the street from the House of Inspired Hands. A relic of the time when sailors lived on the mud flats north of Mount Waterdeep and the rich had yet to migrate north from Castle Waterdeep, it is famous among sailors up and down the Sword Coast, who throng to visit it when they make land at the city.

# The Place

I found the wide, iron-barred door of this dark, ramshackle place late at night. I thought it was just on the edge of the ward, not in its depths, but I walked past tall house after tall house.

When I came at last to the Flagon, I couldn't believe how small it was. Inside, it descended in a series of steps, opening into a cellar level larger than is aboveground. Yet there is scarce room for all the fish, flotsam, and ships' gear that crowds the place.

As I went in, water shone back at me from tanks of sullen, gliding blackjaws, moon-faced clearfins, and the dangerous kgrench. All around were nets, blown-glass floats, anchors, and wave-worn figureheads. The awesome skeleton of an eye of the deep hung overhead. Lamps set in its eye sockets cast an eerie, flickering glow over all.

# The Prospect

The interior of the Flagon is not at all the slick, expensive watering hole one expects in Sea Ward—for that, go to Gounar's or the Ship's Wheel. Yet unlike the rough bars of Dock Ward, the place felt safe, like a refuge from the storms of the sea. It even creaks and groans just like a ship when winds blow high. It was full of sailors eager to spin yarns of the sea's mysteries over plentiful drink and the freshest fish to be had in the city.

# The Provender

Food in the Flagon means cheese, grapes, bread, and lots and lots of seafood—seafood hauled live and dripping from tanks all around the place, and cooked, swiftly and expertly, in front of your eyes. Sailors can bring their own catch to be cooked, too, but the wise guests leave their palates in the care of the four cooks, grizzled old seamen who know just what will make a particular fish or deep-sea creature taste the best. Try the fried sea snake!

# The People

The proprietor is a fat, weathered

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> On the color map, this place is #61.



old man named Ulscaleer Anbersyr. A retired sea captain, he seems to know everyone and is said to have fabulously rich pirate treasures hidden away somewhere in the city. Some told me he quietly supplies pirates with food and gear as well as fencing goods for them.

#### The Prices

The ruffians and lowlives are kept out by the prices. The splendid but simple meals are 7 sp/plate, and drink goes by the tankard: 3 coppers for rough ale, 5 coppers for good ale, 1 sp for zzar, and then steeply upwards for wine and spirits, up to 14 gp for the best firebelly whiskey.

Ulscaleer is proud of the fact that you can't drink even the finest wine out of anything but a tankard in his place. He has little use for dandified nobles and snobs of any sort.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Flagons damp cellars are said to have a hidden tunnel, that winds down a long away by stair and ladder shaft to caverns near to a strange, lawless place in the depths called Skullport." Ulscaleer, I was told, charges 5 gp to open the stoutly barred, magi-cally protected door that seals the cellar off from the top of the



tunnel. All openings are performed by a half-dozen armed men. Ulscaleer keeps some sort of magical wand at the ready during such openings. Much illicit trade passes this way, with the Lords of Waterdeep being none the wiser.

I also heard something about a Sea Ghost—a dripping wraith of a drowned pirate, festooned with seaweed, that pursues those who meddle in the affairs of pirates. Regular patrons told me, however, such talk was just nonsense put about to scare off the overly inquisitive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Elminster says these tales are true.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> And so, he affirms, is this tale.

<sup>10</sup> It turns spells as a *ring of spell turning*, sounding an alarm gong whenever this defense is activated.

<sup>11</sup> Elminster's not so sure this is only empty words!



# Other Places of Interest in Sea Ward

If one tires of opulence and isn't hungry to brave the dangers of the sinister Dragon Tower of the wizard Maaril or the fool-swallowing Blue Alley, what else is there to do in Sea Ward? Perhaps, gossip? Yes, the Street of Whispers didn't get that name for nothing. But gossip's a game visitors play to learn what to see and where to go. One has to be a resident to really *enjoy* gossip.

You can also shop. You can spend a *lot* of money very quick-

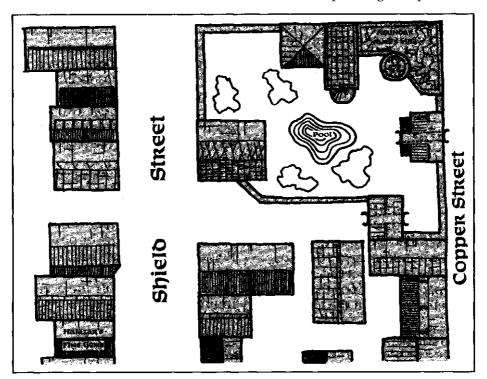
ly and easily in Sea Ward. We've all seen overpriced goods, so I've tried to pick out some outstanding or useful establishments.

# Shops

Aurora's Realms Shop "Singing Dolphin" Catalogue Counter

This is the Sea Ward outlet of the famous Faerun-wide all goods retail chain. It occupies the third shopfront north from the corner of the Street of the Singing Dolphin and Grimwald's Way, on the west side of the Dolphin.

It has six guards who work in shifts of three and three, and who wear sparkling weapons







and finery; a handsome male counter clerk of impeccable taste and great tact, Orloth Theldarin; and a service mage of many rings, airs, and grand entrances, Saerghon "the Magnificent" Alir. Saerghon thinks himself the greatest mage in Waterdeep, but hasn't even opened all the tomes and scrolls he's acquired down through the years.

# Halazar's Pine Gems

This shop has a glistening black front kept shiny with magic. In

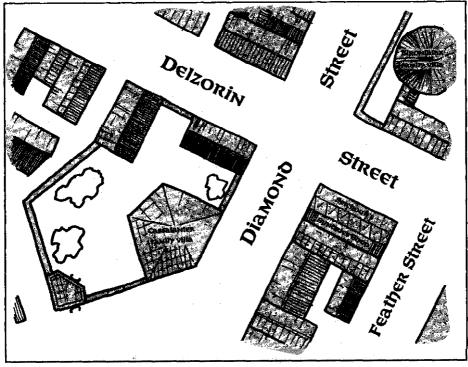
its center gleams a single sparkling gem the size of a man's head (an illusion). Those touching the gem feel a wrenching shock as the magic temporarily drains them of a small amount of energy to sustain itself.<sup>12</sup>

Inside are truly the finest gems one can find for sale, exquisitely cut and mounted, displayed in glass cases with severe simplicity and sold for precisely *four times* what they'd fetch anywhere else. Waterdeep being what it is, the gems *do* sell, as folk proudly boast of how much they paid. The security arrangements are confidential, but powerful.

<sup>13</sup>Rumors of gargoyles, Elminster hints, are not unfounded.

 $<sup>^{12}</sup>$ Halazar's is location #50 on the color map. The illusion magic drains 1 hp, which can be recovered in any normal manner, to power itself.





Proprietor: Stromquil Halazar, Guildmaster of the Jewellers' Guild is the proprietor. He is a tall, aristocratic, sneering man of soft words and watchful eyes.

# Selchoun's Sundries Shop

This shop has those tourist knickknacks that travelers swiftly grow to hate (such as toy wooden shields emblazoned with the words: "I Saw Waterdeep— and Survived!") but it is also the only place in the entire ward where you can buy string, and

thongs, and kindling and flint, and clay pipes, and carrysacks, and—you catch my thrust? Very useful to the visitor.

*Proprietor:* Osbrin Selchoun, a fat, very short man with a rolling gait and a cheerful, huffing nature, is the proprietor.<sup>14</sup>

### Tavenns

Gounar's Tavern

!!!! 000

This is one of the most brightly lit taverns you'll ever see. It gleams and sparkles with mirrored glass and cut glass faux

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Location #85 on the color map.



gems everywhere to catch and throw back the many *glowing globes* that hang in the air. It's bright because citizens go here to be seen and to survey each other as much as to relax over a drink.

The words *slick* and *on display* come to mind. On the other hand, if you want to be noticed in Waterdhavian high society, this is *the* place. Expect to pay 6 gp/glass for drinks and double that for quality wines. If bought by the bottle, drinks are 25 gp and up.

*Proprietor:* Doblin Gounar is the proprietor. Doblin is a coldly egotistical hard nose—the sort you hate on sight.<sup>15</sup>

# The Ship's Wheel

# !!!! 000

Located on a corner just inside West Gate, this place is a little less high-nosed and a lot less clean and bright than Gounar's. It's also probably the safest tavern you'll ever see. Old men come here to watch each other's hair fall out over drinks that cost 4 gp/glass or 10 gp/bottle, with double those prices for fine wines.

Adorned in the front lobby with a gleaming ship's wheel large enough for a titan (of all the city's taverns, only Gounar's and the Wheel have front lobbies), this is the place for those with too much money or too many years to want to go to Gounar's.

*Proprietor:* Olhin Shalut is old, affable, and full of himself, but wealthy. He is always armed with a lot of magic items.<sup>16</sup>

#### lnns

Dacer's Inn

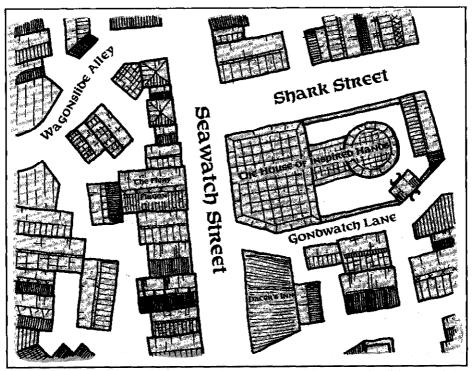
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Located south of the temple of Gond on Seawatch Street, this fine old inn caters to rich sailors who want to stagger to bed from the Fiery Flagon as late as possible and to the constant trade of pilgrims and others visiting the temple. As a result, it is a very prosperous place that is wellbuilt and incorporates all the innovations and improvements that Gondfolk suggest, such as dumbwaiter shafts that bring hot food to each room, sliding bolts recessed into every room door, alarm gongs on each floor, pumped water on tap in each room, and suchlike, and avoids a lot of the more ostentatious frills that some places north of Mount Waterdeep indulge in.

Dacer's is a quiet, luxurious place to stay and is almost worth the 8 gp/night per head it costs to stay there (stabling and simple meals are included). Only water and zzar—at 12 gp/bottle—are available to drink. Dacer's will send runners for food you order from street vendors or cooks

 $<sup>^{15}</sup>_{16}$  Location #55 on the color map. Location #51 on the color map.





elsewhere, and have it delivered to your room, a rare luxury that is most appreciated on wet days!

Proprietress: Amasanna Vumendir is a dusky-skinned, agile hostess of few words but a keen intellect. She orders her staff about with hand gestures.<sup>17</sup>

# Maerghoun's Inn

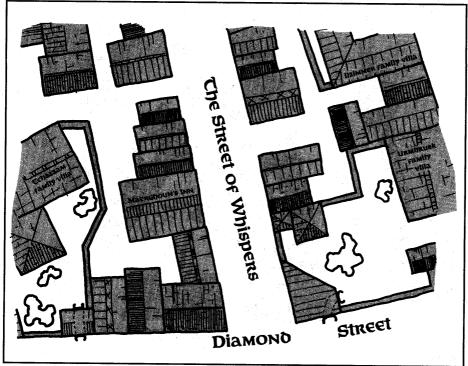
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Located on the west side of the Street of Whispers, just north of Diamond Street, this old, opulent inn of scented purple hangings, flickering lamps, and dark wood paneling is much favored by young couples and by Water-deep's paid escorts. No food or drink is available, but you are free to bring it in or have it delivered. Utmost discretion is observed. Each room has inner curtains, so that staff can bring things or do things in one part of a room without seeing or being seen by the guests in another part of the same room.

Maerghoun's is notable for its large round beds, complimentary purple silken house robes, and soundproofing. Extreme privacy is the watch word. The inn is used by many to conduct sensitive business deals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Location #59 on the color map.





*Proprietor:* Yuth Sammardoun, the proprietor, is a cynical, crafty man with white hair but dark eyebrows who's seen it all—and lived because he said little about it and continues to do so. <sup>18</sup>

# Pilgrims' Rest

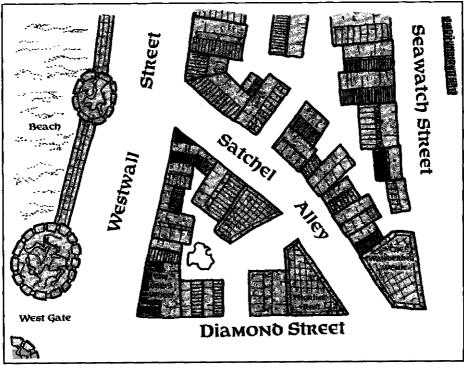
iii aaaa

Located in the triangular northwestern angle of the intersection of Diamond Street and Satchel Alley, this is the humblest of Sea Ward's inns and the cheapest. It's usually crammed with faithful worshippers who have come to the city to visit one of the temples (hence its name). There's actually nothing special about this place—which means that it would be a first-class inn anywhere else in the whole of Faerun. One can get a private room for 9 gp/night, with stabling and a solid evening meal included in the price. A two-share (two double beds, usually rented to two couples) is 6 gp/bed per night. A common room (8 beds or more) is 4 gp/night per person.

Proprietor: Balaghast Brightlingar is a grim, hard-working exwarrior, whose gruff manner conceals a sincerely kind heart,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Location #58 on the color map.





eager to lend a helping hand to anyone in need.<sup>19</sup>

# The Wandering Wemic

Located in the angle between an alley and two streets, this large, recently opened inn offers ample, airy, well-lit rooms, new furnishings, clean surroundings, high rates, and an efficient, numerous staff-including bouncers to keep undesirables out. The 10 gp/room per day rate includes stabling, a valet service for cleaning and repairing

clothes and boots, and a bottle of wine per head per evening, but no food. It provides a good place for wealthy merchants who want no trouble over a place to stay.

*Proprietor:* A big, easygoing man, Cheth Thanion is far more alert than he seems. He never forgets a face or anyone doing him out of money.<sup>20</sup>

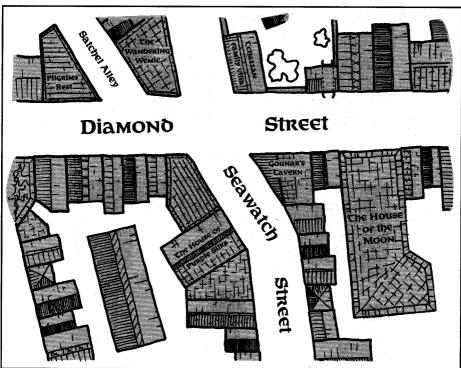
## Festhalls

The House of Purple Silks

Standing on the west side of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Location #52 on the color map. <sup>20</sup> Location #53 on the color map.





Seawatch Street, just south of its intersection with Diamond Street, this is one of the most famous pleasure palaces of the Sword Coast. For decades, its name has been synonymous with decadent dalliance. Its trademark is the sheer purple silks worn by its ladies.

Inside, it's a series of warm, carpeted rooms crowded with cushions, bold guests, and bolder staff ladies. Not a place for the bashful. Highly recommended. Rumored to have contraband hidden inside some cushions, and under certain areas of carpet.

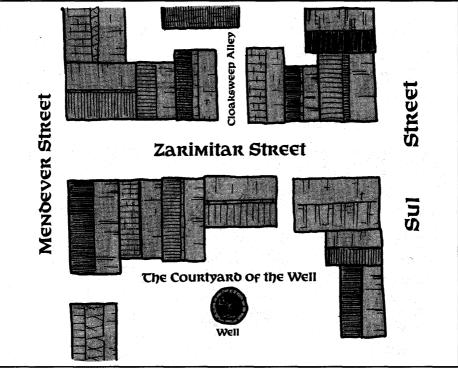
Proprietress: The proprietress, Jathaliira Thindrel, is petite, pert, and always bustling about. A guest who insisted on her company at his every visit described her as having "a shrewish temper overlaid by a passionate nature." She is in her forties, but still energetic and good-looking, and is reputed to be a shrewd investor and very rich.

# Alleys

Sea Ward's alleys are the playground of the rich, famous, reckless, and utterly undisci-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Location #54 on the color map. Elminster says Jathaliira is *very* rich—and a close friend of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. She can call on magical aid whenever desired and also has a hired band of fists (a dozen bouncers).





plined—but they are clean and either short or wide, offering the armed and careful person plenty of fighting or running room.

## Cloaksweep Alley

This wide, very short passage runs north off Zarimitar Street due north of the Courtyard of the Well. Its name comes from an incident involving the long-ago wizard Milist Samblin of the Many Cloaks—who, when set upon by thieves in this alley used

a cloak that swallowed them whole in one flap. They were never seen again!<sup>22</sup>

Today, the alley is notable as the usual vending place of a nameless old man who sells ear oil. Made of the fat of adders boiled down into oil, it is thought by many to be a cure for deafness when poured into the ears. I shudder at the very thought.

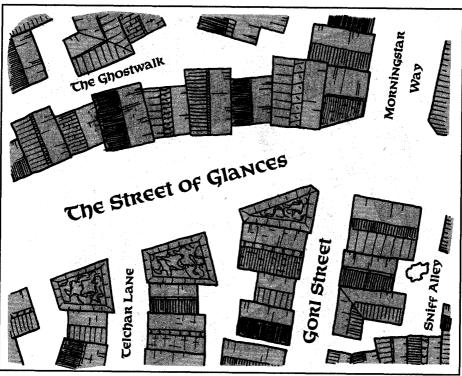
#### The Ghostwalk



This crescentiform alley branches

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Elminster believes the cloak was a magical device that *teleported* those caught in its folds elsewhere—too far away for the thieves to ever return to Waterdeep. He also warns strongly against trying the ear oil!





off the southern half of Murlpar Street and curls around the interior of the city block it's found in, providing delivery access and garbage storage for the businesses and homes located here. It boasts several shadowtops (climbing trees that local children spend much time playing in). It's also known to be the place where the ghost of a long-ago noble rake, a harmless but frightening phantom, walks. He carries a drawn sword and whispers, "I've killed him! I've killed him!" as he staggers along, his own fresh blood welling out and down him until he's entirely covered—and fades away.

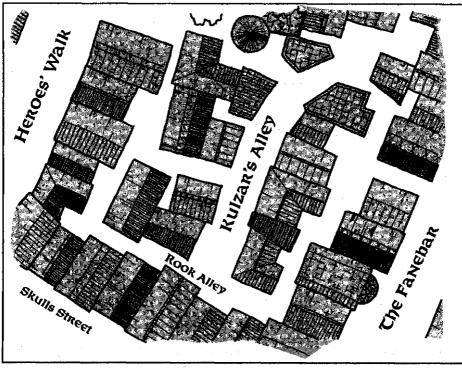
### Gondwatch Lane

B

This alley runs along the southern wall of the House of Inspired Hands, Waterdeep's temple of Gond. The temple's main entry gate opens onto it, and it is named for its use by locals to watch the latest explosive or otherwise entertaining results of inventions dedicated to Gond.

If inventions seem too dangerous to operate within the temple, they're often tried here. Things can get quite dangerous! Locals are generally unconcerned, and stand watching while food vendors circulate among them.





# Kulzar's Alley

This alley runs south from the Wallway to join with Rook Alley. It is named for a famous local sailor, who dwelt here before his death some 70 winters ago. Kulzar was master of a ship appropriately known as the *Lost* Luck, which ran aground on shoals near Waterdeep one stormy night and broke up. Kulzar, a man of terrific strength, swam his personal cabinhold treasure ashore chest by chest through the crashing surf, and is reputed to have hidden it somewhere in or under this alley

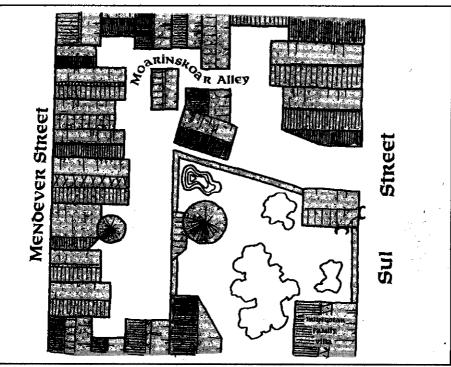
Many have looked, but Kulzar's gems and coins have never been found. Any folk who try digging for them will attract the attention of the city watch, who'll require that they replace the paving stones when they're done and forbid any tunneling towards the city wall. Diggers will also attract the attention of certain old sailors, who'll shadow the treasure-seekers in hopes that they'll discover Kulzar's "jools" and can then be robbed.

# Moarinskoar Alley

B

This alleyway curls around the





interior of the city block bounded by Mendever, Vondil, Sul, and Delzorin Streets, and is named for a famous ancestor of the Irlingstar noble family, whose villa is partly encircled by the alley. Moarinskoar rebelled against the family hopes and dictates, and ran away to sea to become a famous shipmaster. After a long, successful trading career on the Sword Coast, he turned pirate—and is said to sail his ship still, as a wight commanding a zombie crew. The Moonwind, his fast caravel, 23 is now a ghost ship, still seen scud-

ding along the Sword Coast. Moarinskoar tries to board all the ships he meets. If a ship is bound for Waterdeep, he does not attack, but demands that it deliver a message to the Irlingstars: "Tell my mother I love her; but I'm not ready to come home yet." Local lore whispers that when he does come back, this peaceful alley will become a killing ground haunted by his undead crew!

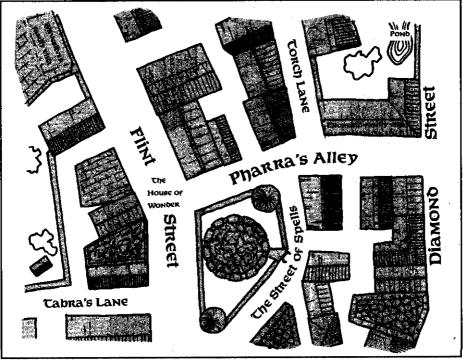
### Moonstar Alley

J

This back alley curls around the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Ship types and statistics are detailed on page 36 of FR5 *The Savage Frontier*. The Irlingstar villa is #93 on the color map.





walled villa<sup>24</sup> of the noble family for which it is named. Of old, Waterdeep's first temple to Selune was located on this site. Known as the High House of Stars, it was burned to the ground by raiding worshippers of Bane. Selune's faithful never set foot on the desecrated ground again, building their present temple a block to the west. Local rumor holds that the cellars of the burnt temple still hide magic and wealth, buried under burned rubble—and that they can be reached by stairs and shafts now hidden under the paving stones of this alleyway

# Pharra's Alley

III

This alleyway is named for the first magistress of the House of Wonder (the temple to Midnight, formerly to Mystra, which the alley passes), who died more than 120 years ago. It is a busy shortcut route used by merchants and their delivery carts, and is often crowded with would-be wizards coming to the House of Wonder to try and hire on as an apprentice to a wizard. Some are anxious to impress everyone with their magic or are just very, very nervous-and they have been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Location #66 on the color map.



known to let fly wildly with magic, endangering passersby.

They vanish hurriedly though, when the Circle of Skulls appears. This spellhaunt, as wizards call it, is all that is left of some early priests of Mystra who tried to devise their own means of immortality—and achieved only a lich-like state.

These eerie skulls are always seen floating in a circle, arguing among themselves in hollow echoing voices. They spit spells from their empty mouths or hurl beams of fire from their empty eve sockets when angered by those they encounter, but are unpredictable and may help someone with information instead of attacking. They seem tied to Pharra's Alley and never appear anywhere else in the city, though the information they pass on indicates that they must be able to see and hear things in other parts of Waterdeep.

# Prayer Alley

Running south off Aureenar Street at its eastern end, this alleyway hooks around inside a city block to parallel Phastal Street, to the south, for much of its length. It is named for those caught in it in more lawless days by thieves. Such unfortunates didn't have a prayer of escape due to the length of the alley and its lack of side exits.

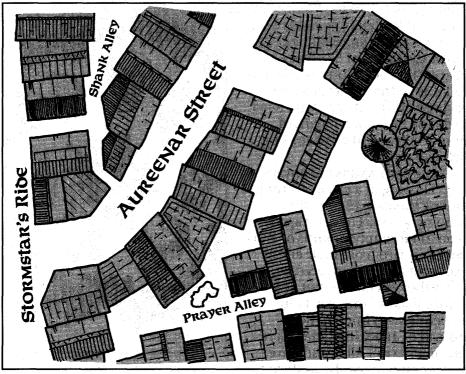


A disused warehouse encircled by it (located just east of its lone tree) is sometimes magically replaced by an infamous vanishing shop that deals in magic, spell components, weird artifacts, and objects from other worlds and planes. This place, rarely seen these days, is known as Whistlewink's Revenge, after the crazed old wizard who runs it.

# Roguerun Alley

This narrow alley runs up the interior of the westernmost city block on the north side of the Street of Glances. A famous inn, the House of the Flying Horse,





once backed onto this alley. The inn was used by smugglers as a clearinghouse for fencing stolen goods and was ultimately destroyed in a spell duel between rival wizards. A treasure of unclaimed smugglers' loot is still said to lie hidden somewhere around or under this alley which got its name from the number of times smugglers ran full tilt down it to escape city guardsmen raiding the inn.

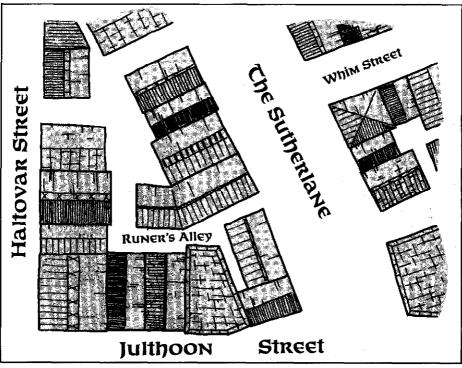
#### Rook Alley



This alley just north of Skulls Street, curls around the inside of the city block entered by Kulzar's Allev.

It is named for a notable thief, the Rook, who flourished about 50 years ago and had his secret headquarters here. He died fighting in it when discovered by officers of the city guard. The Rook's hold was a series of old crypts—the old burial grounds that give Skulls Street its name – that he tunneled down to from this alley. The tunnel, blocked off with stones, is said to still exist, along with his treasure. It is guarded by undead from the crypt who attacked the last folk brave enough to unseal the tunnel.





#### Runer's Alley

This short, three-branched passage winds through the triangular city block that stands between Julthoon Street, Haltover Street, and the Sutherlane. It is named for the Runer, a minstrel who slept here for years.

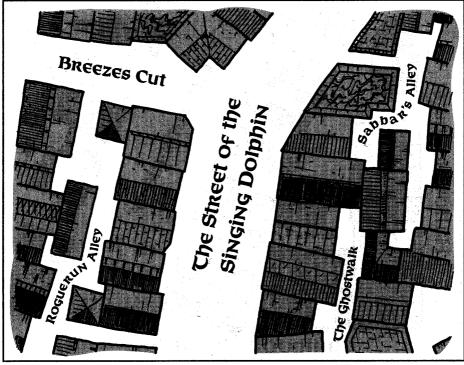
A wizard once mistakenly thought Runer's pipes were enchanted and his song a magical attack, so he used a *dispel magic* on the minstrel. It stripped away Runer's magical disguise, revealing him to be a missing noblewoman, Shrylla Manthar.

This eccentric free spirit had

fled when her parents told her whom to marry and escaped discovery for almost 30 years. Unmasked, she refused to return to her house and station and lived on in this alley becoming known as Shrylla of the Spiders. Her long, fantastically coifed hair hid not only needle daggers and lockpicks, but a poisonous spider trained to defend her.

Feeling death coming, she climbed Mount Waterdeep to see one last dawn and died there. Her body was not discovered for months among the rocks—and the spider lived on in her skull, using one empty, staring eye socket as its door.





#### Sabbar's Alley



This tiny, dogleg alleyway opens eastwards off the Street of the Singing Dolphin, just south of Aureenar Street. It is named for Sabbar, an unscrupulous wizard who dwelt at its innermost end until he disappeared, some 80 winters ago.

Sabbar was known to hurl fireballs at boys who ventured into this alley to play, and was infamous for once maliciously transforming buckets of raw, live fishbait worms into the semblance of well-cooked, spiced beef roasts, just before guests were served at a feast.

Nowadays, this alley is the gathering place for a local street gang, who can sometimes be hired to watch or follow a person by anyone bold enough to contact and pay them.

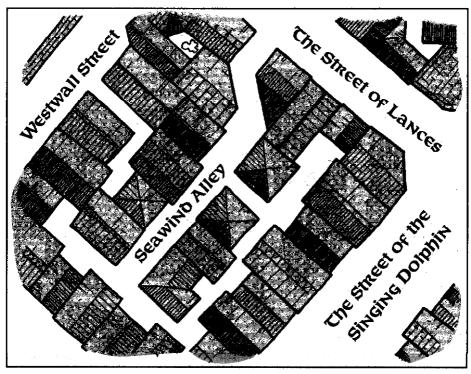
#### Satchel Alley



This shortcut runs northwest from Diamond Street. It was named for the bags of gems and valuables that jewelers used to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> On the FR1 Waterdeep and the North map, Aureenar Street isn't labeled. It's the major street south of and curving parallel to the Street of Lances, in the extreme northern tip of Waterdeep. It's shown on the City System maps and the color map in this accessory.





carry along it before waiting thieves made the trip too dangerous (in the days when Waterdeep had a Thieves Guild). It's now a place where the coaches, carts, and mounts of the travelers staying at the inns all around it load and unload their passengers and cargo, and as a result is well-paved with dung.

#### Seawind Alley

Running south from the Street of Lances, this alleyway offers rear access to the buildings in its city block. Usually shrouded in sea mist, it once led to a now-vanished inn, the Banshee at Bay (other, unrelated inns also bear this name in Cormyr and in Amn). The inn was destroyed, over a hundred winters ago, after everyone inside it was found dead of some unknown disease. Their restless spirits are still said to haunt the alley though few have seen anything eerie in recent years.

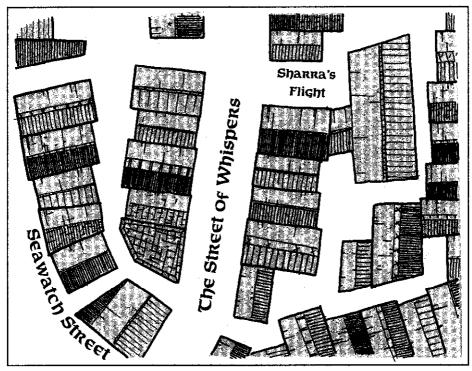
#### Shank Alley

J

This alley<sup>26</sup> circles the interior of a triangular city block north of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> On the City System maps, this alley is mislabeled as Shark Alley.





Aureenar Street and east of Stormstar's Ride. It is named for an antiquated sort of knife known as a shank, wielded by thieves who used to gather in this alley.

Today, it is a crowded place stacked with fish crates where many city birds gather to feed. Local youths and visitors skilled with a sling or hurled sticks and stones kill the birds to sell to cooks throughout the city or for their own meals.

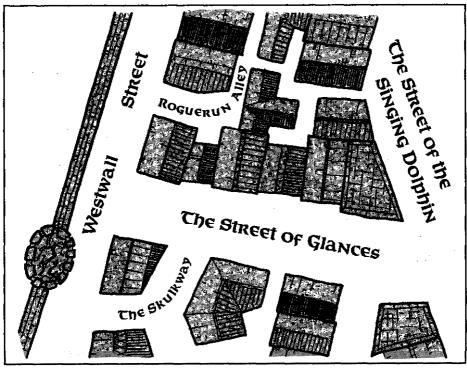
#### Sharra's Flight

This wide courtyard opens east

off the Street of Whispers and connects with Moonstar Alley. It is named for Sharra of the Invisible Dragon, the famous archmage who roused Neverwinter in a long-ago coastal war by using a spell to bring her cry into every bedroom of the city: "Awake, and to arms! Awake, or the princes of Sundul will come for us in our beds!" Due to her efforts the forces of Neverwinter rose up, defended their city against the naval attack, and followed their foes home to destroy the Calishite realm of Sundul.

Sharra created this route when still an apprentice to





escape being caught in a magical battle between rival mages of power. She blasted down a building and ran through the space she'd just cleared. The open space has remained that way ever since. It is today used by several street vendors, who cram their stalls into it, selling candies, sweets, exotic liqueurs, eel pie and rare delicacies of the deep, and cut-rate jewelry to passersby.

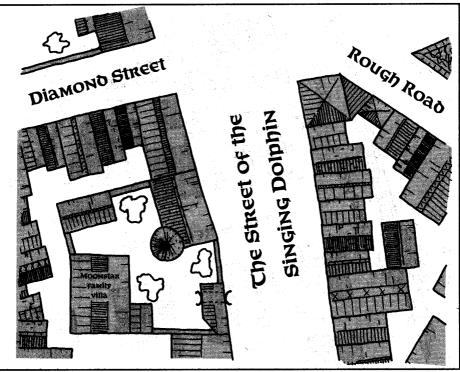
## The Skulkway

This short passage cuts across the southern corner where the Street of Glances meets Westwall

Street. It was literally used to skulk past the noses of the city guard when they established a stationary watch at the crossroads against smugglers. At the time, the Skulkway was occupied by a building—or so all but the smugglers thought. It was actually an empty shell, with holes in each wall large enough for a cart to be driven through. The holes were covered by illusions created by an enterprising wizard, and during the day doors were rolled across the openings under the cloaking illusion to avoid unintentional discovery of the magic.

This lasted until one day the building vanished—illusions,





stonework, roof and all. Some claim the smugglers fought amongst themselves, and destroyed the place. Others think the Lords—or a powerful wizard acting for them—made the building vanish. The cause of the disappearance was a hot topic for arguments among local citizens. None knew the truth.<sup>27</sup>

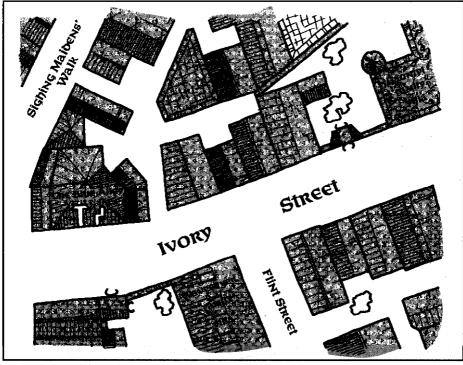
Sniff Alley

B

From the north end of Gorl Street, this alley curves east and then north to meet the Street of Glances. Named for the smell of the fishbone pile that was located here until the Lords tightened laws about garbage, this is today a pleasant, paved back way with a tree, benches for relaxing under its shade, and a small handpump of cool water for public use. It's a good spot for the visitor to rest in for awhile—but it also seems to be a favorite meeting place for whispered conversations amongst shady characters. Try very hard to look uninterested and hum or yawn to indicate that you're not listening if you're getting the eye.

 $<sup>^{27}</sup>$ Elminster told us, with a gentle smile, "We should ask Khelben about that. He grows restless from time to time, like all the rest of us."





#### Wagonslide Alley

This alley links Westwall Street with Seawatch Street through the block bounded by Diamond Street on the south and Grimwald's Way on the north. Its name comes from the steep, slippery slope leading up it from the west that has made many a wagon slip down it in wet or icy weather. In winter, sea rime is almost unbelievably fast to freeze here.

To improve traction, the stones of this street are laid loose, so they sit unevenly. Tripping is easy if you go too fast or don't look down. Under many of the stones are small hollows or pits, some undoubtedly dug by children playing in the street. Locals told me that not only are messages often left under certain stones, but some of them conceal magical weapons left ready by thieves who operate in the city from time to time. These are invisible weapons cached in plain sight under the stones—but, since they are invisible, no one can see them. Horridly clever, eh?

It is certain that whenever I went up or down this alley, I could feel the heavy gaze of eyes from windows above, where old men sit seemingly all day with nothing to do.







# North Ward



orth Ward is the quietest ward of the city. This district is home to most of Waterdeep's wealthi-

er middle classes and lesser noble families. It is an area of quiet neighborhoods dominated by private, walled noble villas. Little of interest meets the visitor's eye, but local talk says much plotting and partying goes on behind closed doors in this reach of the city—intrigue that affects trade, wars, and wealth as far away as Thay. Yet, unless you come to the city already in the know as a member of this or that guild, cabal, merchant alliance, or underground network, there is actually little in North Ward for you to see.

Aside from folk strolling to or from their homes or private parties, this area practically shuts down at dusk. It is often so quiet that a man talking in the street can be heard by others outdoors several streets away!

Watch patrols are frequent,

but are polite and lightly armed.<sup>1</sup> Rowdiness and street violence of any sort are not tolerated in this ward unless one is noble or well-dressed and drunk. Those who engage in such activities are quickly and roughly handled by the city watch.

#### Landmarks

The only widely known ward landmark is the Gentle Mermaid,2 whose fame as a gambling hall has spread up and down the Sword Coast. A more interesting evening can be spent at the Misty Beard tavern,<sup>3</sup> a refined but often lively drinking spot staffed largely by exotic and monstrous beings from all over the Realms. The ward is dominated by the ornate walls, spires, wrought iron work, and balconies of many walled villas and grand houses, but only the lucky or privileged visitor sees more of these than can be glimpsed from the street. Two noble families, the Hawkwinters and the Roaring-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> City watch patrols are detailed on page 17 of FR1 *Waterdeep and the North.* In this ward, four-sword detachments (more often female officers than in any other ward of the city) pass a given point about every 15 minutes, and look in to a tavern or inn dining room about every 40 minutes.

As detailed on pages 17 and 23 of the *City System* set booklet, the city guard also patrols North Ward, in six-man detachments. Typical patrol details are as given therein, on page 23. Reinforcements will be a dozen LG hm F3s to F6s clad in chain mail and armed with maces, long swords, daggers, slings, and a polearm appropriate to the situation.

Guard patrols pass a given street location about every 50 minutes, but appear in 1d6 minutes when a city watch patrol blows a warning horn in this ward.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Location #114 on the color map. <sup>3</sup> Location #155 on the color map.



horns, often give large, splendid parties at their villas. I'll give you what I can recall of these splendid houses. My memory is rather spotty though, as the delicious wines served were both plentiful and strong!

Only two guildhalls stand in this ward: the House of Crystal<sup>5</sup> and the House of Healing. The House of Crystal houses the headquarters of the Guild of Glassblowers, Glaziers, & Speculum-Makers, where one can buy the finest crystal balls and mirrors, ranging in prices from 1 sp for a curved ladies' handglass to 600 gp for a sphere of perfect crystal as large around as a small shield. The House of Healing is the headquarters for the Guild of Apothecaries & Physicians, who do very well here as an emergency hospital and vendor of medicines and potions. The House of Healing is a place many tragically diseased folk or their agents come specially to Waterdeep to visit.

Several shopkeepers in this wealthy clean district, however, are heads—spokemasters—of

their respective guilds. Darion Sulmest of Sulmest's Splendid Shoes & Boots' is the public contact of the Order of Cobblers & Corvisers. (His boots and shoes are splendid, too. I'm wearing a warm, springy pair of his lifelong swashboots right now and they are worth every single copper of the 12 gp they cost me. Pairs not guaranteed to last as long as the wearer can be had for 8 gp or less.) Shalrin Maerados of Maerados Fine Furs<sup>8</sup> is Gentleman Keeper of the Solemn Order of Recognized Furriers & Woolmen. And Relchoz Hriiat of Hriiat Fine Pastries' speaks for the Bakers' Guild.

There are also whispers about stolen goods (and even smuggling!). The largest and most exotic things, they say-ships and golems, for example—can be bought and sold through a certain noble resident in the ward. I was unable to contact him, and dare not reveal his name here, for fear of spreading malicious, "bladed" tonguework. Discreet word can be left for him at the Grinning Lion tavern.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The Hawkwinter family villa is #151 on the color city map, and the house of the Roaringhorns is

On the color city map, the House of Crystal is #104. Its mirror-bedecked facade dominates the west side of Copper Street, just north of the Market.

Location #117 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The shop is #111 on the color map. <sup>8</sup>Location #112 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Location #134 on the color map. In all cases, relevant guilds and noble families and something of their current doings, interests or fees, and current heads, are covered in the Waterdeep and the North

Location #135 on the color map. A certain fat man sitting on a barstool almost every moment the Lion is open, Hala Myrt, is eyes and ears for the noble Orlpar Husteem, who deals largely in spices, scents, wines, and various potions. His house is #160 on the color map.



## The Gentle Mermaid

Tavern, Gambling House, & Festhall

# !!!! 0000

Like the unrelated Blushing Mermaid festhall in Dock Ward, the Gentle Mermaid is a place of luxury, offering no accommodation save for a few dungeon cells reserved for debtors, sharpers, and thieves. It does boast the largest and richest gambling rooms in all Waterdeep—perhaps in all Faerun.<sup>11</sup>

Its large, carpeted central gaming chamber has a soaring, pavilion-like roof, through which slowly shifting lights play in a soft, continually changing show. The room holds two dozen or so circular, cloth-covered tables, where Waterdeep's wealthiest play at dice and cards.<sup>12</sup>

The atmosphere here is refined, relaxed, clean, and free of danger. Many an old noble matron plays solitaire, or two dowagers may sit and gossip, sip their favorite drinks, and both play solitaire.

The attentive Staff of over 20 bouncers, reinforced by unseen

but watching wizards<sup>13</sup> (via wizard eyes), ensures that guests aren't disturbed by thieves, ruffians, beggars, or harassment of any sort. This is a place to see and be seen, to meet people, but not to do business—unless it can be managed without bothering anyone, or you'll be ejected.

#### The Place

Alone in the interior of a city block bounded by the High Road and Copper, Sulmoor, and Hassantyr's Streets, the Gentle Mermaid is a huge stone pile of turreted and balconied splendor. Its exterior is the result of several rich merchant owners with more wealth than taste adding their ideas onto an already ostentatious but abandoned noble house.

Within, everything is carpets, tapestries, curtains, and hangings. Soft lights, subtle perfumes, and magical heat dominate the rooms and passages to make the Mermaid a place of cozy warmth, active the night and day through, with evening the busiest time. Many come to lose money at the gaming tables—or spend it to enjoy the company of the charming and beautiful escorts of both genders on the Mermaid staff

genders on the Mermaid staff. The upper floors have been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>On the color city map, the Gentle Mermaid is #114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>For an unusually quiet view of this chamber, see page 63 of the *Knight of the Living Dead* 

adventure gamebook. These wizards are senior members of the Watchful Order (mages of 8th level or higher), hired at the princely rate of 77 gp/shift. A day and a night consists of four six-hour shifts. There are two wizards per shift, equipped with wands, rings, scrolls, and items they expect to be effective in quickly and decisively quelling any disturbances—such as hotheaded outlander mages who start magical duels.



turned into a labyrinth of lounges, cozy bowers, private rooms, and secret passages which are used by staff and by certain famous clients who wish to avoid being seen. At least one such passage enters the Mermaid underground, running from the rear of a nearby shop. I couldn't learn which shop.

## The Prospect

The Mermaid prides itself on serene, above-snobbery luxury in creating a home that nobles will prefer to their own. Unpleasantness of any sort is stamped out, swiftly and ruthlessly and the wealthy are encouraged to spend as much time losing money at the

gaming tables as they wish. The less wealthy are encouraged to drift about watching—before being deftly chosen by escorts who steer them upstairs to a lounge where each guest can choose a companion to while away a pleasant time with.

#### The Provender

Table fees are a gold piece a seat. This entitles a guest to a starter glass of whatever sparkling vintage is being served at that table and to as many snacks from passing silver platters as they're bold enough to take. The canapés consist of crab rolls, smoked salmon and silverfin daggers (slivers of fish, served on slices of





lemon or lime), pickle and cheese skewers, olive or nut cups, and spicy sausage finger rolls. They are utterly delicious!

Wine and spirits of all sorts may be had, but they are dear: 1 gp/glass or 12 gp/bottle, regardless of what is being drunk. Escorts sell their time and company for 60 gp for an hour to 10 times that for an entire evening, depending on the escorts fame, whim, and beauty. The Mermaid takes 20% of all fees collected.

### The People

The Mermaid has over 40 efficient, hard-working escorts, a dozen of whom are male. In the past at least one doppleganger has been ferreted out of their midst. The Mermaid's owner now interviews and auditions each escort carefully. Beautiful folk of wealthy or refined breeding and merry sensual natures are desired. Waterdeep attracts many such folk—and the Mermaid ignores the past of any staff, so long as they perform suitably while on duty.

There are two dozen or so security staff (bouncers), under the command of Housemaster Eiraklon Marimmatar, who sits with the watch wizards while his second in command, Ulthlo Relajatyr, marshals and directs the staff on the floor. There's a very old Mermaid joke: "More

than just looking? Look down, then. The escort on the floor will help you."

The Mermaid was founded and for a long time owned by Lady Shaeroon Brossfeather a colorful old dowager of strong will, wit, and intelligence who sponsored poets and other free thinkers and speakers, had many dear—er—friends, and backed unusual causes, getting herself loved by the common folk and disowned by her kin in the process. She died recently. Ownership of the Mermaid passed to the mysterious Jhant Daxer, a caravan owner and moneylender little known in the city.

#### The Prices

A guest who only gambles for part of an evening can expect to pay out 12 to 15 gp in fees and usually lose two to three times that. Large wins are rare. Small wins occur just often enough to keep guests coming back for more.

Tipping is common. Some regular guests give triple a table fee to get a seat at their favorite table. To get a table alone or to get control of who sits there, such as the noble matrons playing solitaire, costs 14 gp, but that includes a personal waiter or waitress whose gender is of the guests choice. To get the use of one of the curtained, private

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Jhant is only a front for Xanathar, the beholder crime lord (detailed in FR1 *Waterdeep and The North*). Anyone mixing with him or the Mermaid will arouse Xanathar's entire organization.





gaming side chambers costs double that. Each holds one table. A dozen of these private gaming side chambers open off the main gaming room.

#### Travelers' Lore

Several tales cling to the Mermaid involving guests who have mysteriously disappeared—and a few lucky winners who staggered out burdened by many gold pieces. The two most interesting tales are also the darkest: the death card and the haunted chessmen. These are not popular topics of discussion in the Mermaid. Those inquiring over-

boldly can expect to swiftly see the street outside.

The death card is still drawn from time to time, though no staff member ever puts it in a deck, nor has it a place in any game. It is thought to be the result of an ancient wizard's curse, and consists of a card that appears in any deck used in the Mermaid. Its face consists of a laughing skull on a black field.

A chilling laugh is heard as the card is uncovered, and a spectral, cowled figure rises up from the card, flying about and swinging a scythe. It attacks the being who drew the card, and its weapon can slay. The touch of almost any spell makes it and the card disappear. The watch wizards are always alert for the appearance of this Hooded Death.

The haunted chessmen are now destroyed or hidden away. They are a set of pieces of unknown origin, used in the strange game brought to Waterdeep by wizards who learned it, Realmslore generally attests, on other worlds. These chessmen moved about the board of their own accord when unattended. In their own eerie games, captured pieces toppled over and changed forms to resemble living folk – whose death they foretold. What animated these grim gaming pieces, and where they are now none can or will say.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The Hooded Death's powers change from time to time, but most who have seen it say it seems to be a wraith (an undead creature— see MC1) armed with a scythe (2d4 damage, 6' arc reach).



## Hawkwinter House

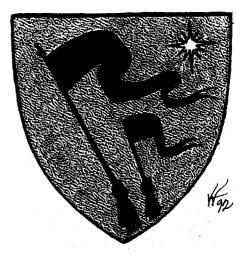
The city villa of this quietly powerful Waterdhavian noble family 16 is the site of many

splendid parties.

On a strategic corner location in a block of fine merchants' houses and luxury apartments, 17 the walled Hawkwinter compound consists of three spired, balconied stone houses made in the likeness of miniature castles – with crenelations, gargoyleshaped downspouts and arched windows only found in the uppermost reaches of the walls. The only exceptions to this design lie in the tall-peaked tiled roofs, which shed copious snow down onto passersby in winter. Some folk believe the downspouts are real gargoyles that the family can release to defend their home. These are kept immobile by strong enchantments controlled by the Hawkwinters.

These miniature castles are linked by winding garden paths, overhung by many old, carefully tended trees, hung with lamps.

When parties are thrown,



many-hued *driftglobes* light every corner of the gloomy halls, passages, and cellars of the castles, and perfume is added to the lamps amid the trees.

Musicians play in chambers here and there, and mages are hired to perform minor illusions—either of languid beauty in the early evening or of mystery danger, and spice later, when those who celebrate until the dawn chase each other around the balconied rooms and dungeons. Oh, yes, these castles have dungeon cells. They cells are very clean and lit with red torches for show but functional—and, I

Their best mounts are black with silver manes and tails. A rare few have blue eyes that glow in the dark—they have 120' infravision and, some warriors swear, a rarer few can even see *invisible creatures* and items as auras, within 70'. Wizards are especially eager to purchase Hawkwinter horses. They are bred to accept spells hurled nearby and from their backs calmly.

 $^{\prime}$  The villa is #151 on the color map. Apartments in the same block rarely fall vacant. When they do,

rooms are typically 35 gp/month and up, with the first season (six months) paid in advance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Traditionally a strong arm of the city guard and troops fielded by the Lords of Waterdeep, the Hawkwinters hunt and breed highly prized war horses on extensive country estates north of nearby Amphail. They spend much of their time there, and make most of their money selling horses in peacetime. In times of war, they serve as mercenary generals and guides, hire out their own cavalry, and work as high-priced, lightning-fast troop outfitters.



doubt not, used from time to time.

Conversation and tales from afar are valued to stave off the boredom that threatens nobles, so adventurers and those newly arrived in the city are welcome as guests. The doors are not open to all, though. Waterdhavian nobles invite a select list of folk: usually Piergeiron, out of courtesy although he but rarely attends such fetes; other nobles with whom the family is on speaking terms; mages and other fashionable or powerful personages, such as guildmasters; and the occasional very successful merchant in some sort of dignified trade.

These guests are expected to bring their spouses or an escort, and from two to six guests each—who may be anyone, such as the aforementioned adventurers and other walking entertainment. Those with ideas of slipping such feasts (elsewhere in Faerun, the term *crashing* is often used) are warned that nobles' doorwards and bouncers are mighty, experienced, quick, and reinforced by

magic and might of arms that even successful adventurers respect—from a safe distance?

Want to get invited? Let it be known around the city that you're newly arrived and either an adventurer of import or that interesting things befell you that you can tell or, even better, show something about. With a smile or two from the gods, someone will invite you. A young, ardent female escort invited me to the party I attended, on the condition that I wear a rather humiliating outfit and address her in an extremely deferential manner. In the interests of seeing what would otherwise be denied me, I agreed—and was treated to a wild evening of flirtation, drink, splendid food, 19 and gossip.

As to the goings-on, let me say merely that on such occasions, the nobles of Waterdeep are ruled by their whims. Fancy costumes, exotic food and drink, even more exotic entertainment—let me tell you, tales you may have heard in your local tavern of the decadence and wild ways of Waterdeep are all true.

outshine these justifiably famous culinary artists.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>There are presently four F12s in the Hawkwinter ranks, and even the slightest Hawkwinter maiden can call on the gargoyles and on more than two dozen magical crossbows that wait behind walls both inside and outside of the castles.

Elminster assures us the gargoyles are real and 100% loyal to those of the family blood. Once loosed, they must taste blood before they can be commanded back into station. When commanded by word and will, the magical crossbows appear (stone panels slide aside) and fire two heavy quarrels per round, at THACO 7, for normal damage (1d4+1 vs.M). Their activator must be of the family blood and need only speak the correct word within 90' of a concealed bow and mentally select the target or targets. The word is different for each crossbow. A bow can fire at up to two targets per round.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Waterdeep boasts many hire-cooks, notably Brazaun of Baldur's Gate and Kathliira Salarth, who descend on your kitchens and whip up fantastic hand-food for feasts if you stock your larders beforehand to their specifications. Noble families pride themselves on having kitchen staff who can





As to the gossip: At parties, nobles can meet—to exchange items, for example—without eyes noticing or tongues whispering, but rarely conduct important business. That's what they have large walled houses with many closed doors for. They do use parties to meet with, manipulate, and arrange future meetings and business with underlings, outsiders, and newcomers. I saw more than two adventuring bands hired in the time it took me to drain a tiny glass of firewine at the feast I attended.

Also, such parties are the only place that outsiders and common folk are likely to hear nobles gossiping about nobles firsthand. The alert listener can learn a lot from a tone of voice, raised eyebrow or lip, or when and how long someone pauses when they are speaking.

The folk who attend Hawk-winter parties are eccentric and powerful—and, if they're noble, up to something all the time. The scent of masked danger is always in the air.

Truly, a Waterdhavian noble's feast is something all should enjoy. If you manage to acquire an invitation to one, by all means go out of your way to ensure that you get to go. However, I plan to attend my next one in my own clothes—or at least in a slightly more dignified outfit.





The Misty Beard

Tavern

# cood !!!!

This interesting place stands on a corner hard by the east wall of the city, where its noise and crowding create as few problems with the refined neighborhood as possible. Its signboard depicts a laughing bearded sailor, with beads of water glistening in a rainbow all over his beard.<sup>20</sup> Minor enchantments make these droplets gleam, sparkle, and change hue from time to time.

The Beard is famous up and down the Sword Coast because it is staffed largely by exotic and monstrous beings from all over the Realms: halflings, lizard men, killmoulis, myconids, faerie dragons, spectators, and even, in the kitchens and cellars, skeletons and zombies<sup>21</sup> under the command of other beings. There are also shapeshifting and illusion-using creatures on staff. As one regular patron put it, "You never know just what you'll see and for most of us, it's the only time we're every likely to see some of these creatures."

Their presence attracts a lot of thrill-seekers, and many visitors of the creatures' own kind. All are welcome, in an uneasy truce enforced by the magical powers of the wand-wielding owners.

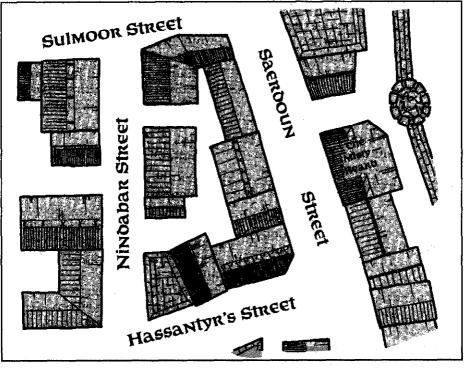
#### The Place

This clean, well-mannered tavern (in such mixed company all folk tend to be extra polite) is a solid-looking stone building with large arched windows, downspouts carved into the likenesses of beautiful winged maidens, and a steeply pitched slate roof. It rises four floors above the street. This was once a tavern known as the Cat and Songbird, but its owners were members of the Thieves Guild, and perished bloodily in an assassination attempt on the gathered Lords of Waterdeep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> This place is #155 on the color city map.

<sup>&</sup>quot;These creatures appear in Volumes 1,2, and 3 of the Monstrous Compendium.





## The Prospect

The interior of the Misty Beard is a well-lit jumble of booths and cozy chairs salvaged from sales all over the city. The rooms all open into a central well, where various stairs curve and zigzag up and down, and winged waiters dart from bar to table with single glasses. The waiters are sprites, who are hired here for month-long shifts, by which time they're usually sick of the city and flit home.

#### The Provender

Food in the Beard tends to be of the breadstick and cheese dip variety. The garlic butter is justly famous, and a wonderful gooseberry jam is made on the premises. The fruit is brought in from High Hill, the owners' estates northeast of the city. There is also very good sausage and morkoth soup, which varies in ingredients. Morkoth soup is one of those simmer-all-day throw-in-whatever's about concoctions. The food is filling, but bland. The varied clientele hold little seasoning in common high regard.

## The People

The half-elven mages who own the place are two wand-wield-



ing<sup>22</sup> sisters, Allet and Vindara Tzuntzin, who once ran the Black Gryphon inn in Elturel. Their monstrous friends and visitors were not welcomed in that city, so they sold out and came to cosmopolitan Waterdeep, where they soon tired of making beds, so they turned their inn into a tavern. The taverns name refers to a private joke between them, involving a bet, a Waterdhavian sailor, and some magic.

The bartender at the Beard is Munzrim Marlpar, a dignified, fearless lizard man of unusual height and intellect. He was outcast from his kin in the Marsh of Chelimber because of those features. He's usually to be found deep in conversation with a beholder-like, deadly looking spectator floating behind the bar: Thoim Zalamm, who is something of a philosopher, and sometimes drifts out over the rooftops of the city on dark nights to spy on the endlessly entertaining doings of humans.

#### The Prices

The Beard has a more varied and well-stocked cellar than anywhere in Waterdeep except perhaps Piergeiron's Palace itself. The many drinkables run from 3 sp/tankard for ale and 4 sp/jack

for zzar (the bargains) up to 12 gp/tallglass for most wines and exotic drinks. Bottles are always six times the price of a glass. Meals are 1 gp/head for as much as you want to consume in one evening from what's on the menu that night.

#### Travelers' Lore

There are many tales of the parties—and occasional brawls at the Beard. The two sisters are quick to use their wands to keep racial fears and hostilities from erupting into full-scale slaughter, and this promise of safety is enough to attract a steady stream of the curious. A rare few citizens are comfortable drinking at the Beard as regulars, but it is a very popular place for lowincome merchants to use to impress out-of-town visitors and a common neutral ground meeting place for merchants and others engaged in difficult negotiations. A few private rooms can be rented for short periods at 10 gp/hour. Some nights things turn into raucous sing-alongs—and as one Waterdhavian told me, "Until you've seen a spectator and a faerie dragon dancing on air together and struggling to harmonize – well, you've not seen Waterdeep!"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Each carries at least six wands on her person, one or two sheathed openly at her belt, and the others hidden down boottops, up sleeves, and so on. They own many, many wands, but a typical carried assortment is as follows:

Allet: enemy detection, frost, magic missiles, misplaced objects, negation
Vindara: fear, fire, flame extinguishing, illusion, lightning, paralyzation, polymorphing.
The wand of misplaced objects is detailed in the Tome of Magic. All others can be found in the DMG.



## Other Places of Interest in North Ward

#### Homes

The High House of Roaringhorn

This city villa of the Waterdhavian noble clan famous for its brawls, parties, and swashbuckling, pranksome approach to life is used to host a seemingly endless succession of feasts. Almost everyone is welcome. The Roaringhorns delight in breaking the heads of vandals and would-be thieves. Although such gatherings can be so crowded and noisy as to resemble a herd of oxen milling about, the down-on-theirluck of Waterdeep can often get food and drink at one of these festive gatherings and meet to conduct shady business, too – though its a bit like whispering secrets in a room full of listeners.

Their hospitality has made the Roaringhorns deeply loved among the citizenry of Water-deep. Old men and street youths alike have been known to leap to the defense of a drunken Roaringhorn in Dock Ward at night. But their behavior has reduced this once-fine, huge walled villa to a well-worn shambles of torn and stained tapestries, splintered furniture, and empty rooms.

The Roaringhorns seem not to



care and never run short of funds. If it's ambiance you seek, their home is like an abandoned hold stripped bare—but there's always fun to be had there at least two nights in a tenday. The family's never short of volunteers when it announces mercenary hirings, either.

#### Shops

Aurora's Realms Shop Catalogue Counter

This is the North Ward outlet of the famous Faerun-wide all goods retail chain. Located next to the House of Healing in a narrow but grand old home converted to luxury apartments above the shop, Aurora's North fronts on the High Road. It has four guards who work in shifts of two and two, a stunningly beautiful but sharp-tongued

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Location #145 on the color map. A partial floor plan of the everyday part of the villa appears on Map 9 of the *City System* boxed set, along with those of several other noble family villas.



counter clerk, Phandalue Tarinthil, and a service-mage, Quirtan Ondever, who delights in acting mysterious and sinister.

# Maerados Fine Furs

This shop sells stylish and well-made furs—winter cloaks, vests, and caps for all, and year-round fashions for the lady of taste, breeding, and deep pockets. Secret pockets are standard in such garments, as are concealed push-daggers. Furs can be perfumed to order, but philandering nobles frown on this—it leaves a distinct scent trail to who one has been with.

Rumors speak of a guardian in the shop. One of the furs is really a living beast—some say a great cat, others a sort of sly furry cloaker—that preys on intruders when the shop is closed.

*Proprietor:* ShalrinMaerados, the Gentleman Keeper of his guild, is the proprietor. He is observant and soft-spoken. He adventures in his spare time and conceals several weapons on his person and in his shop.<sup>24</sup>

# Hriiat Fine Pastries

This shop is a bustling place. Locals line up here when the smells tell them a fresh batch of something is ready for eating.

Hriiat's place (say Hur-REE-atz) is known not just for sweets, but for savory pastries, notably the bite-pie or the meal loaf. Among the sweets, the hand-sized almond-and-apple sugar tarts, at 1 cp each, are especially fine. Bitepies made of pork, beef, or curried mixed meats run to 2 cp each, and mixed fish bite-pies cost only 1 cp each. The meal loaf, a Hriiat original, is an egg-shaped stuffed roll as long as two man's hands full of a stir-fried mix of cooked vegetables and meat doused in a spicy mushroom sauce that visiting merchants trot across the city to get.

All these wares are made for eating in the street as one walks. Hriiat sells fine cloth belt-towels for this purpose. Hriiat food is a hearty treat not to be missed!

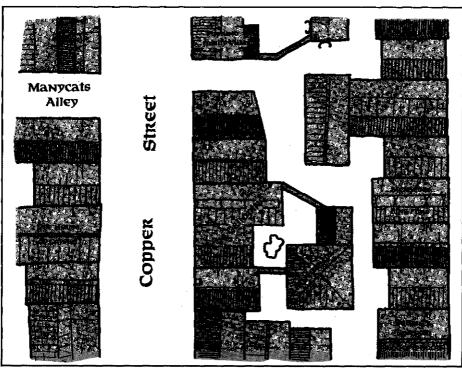
*Proprietor:* Relchoz Hriiat, the public contact for the Bakers' Guild, owns and runs this shop. He is short, stout, and jolly. He is always sampling his wares and offering bites to customers.<sup>25</sup>

# Sulmest's Splendid Shoes & Boots

Footwear here can cost as much as 10 times the going rate elsewhere in the city but any repairs to a Sulmest product are half the

Location #112 on the color map.Location #134 on the color map.





going rate, and many boots can be bought with lifelong guarantees of free replacement for any reason save loss due to theft. Men's shoes, slippers and boots for both sexes are made to custom fit the customers foot. Off the shelf sizes are much cheaper than custom work, going for only twice the average cost. All work is stylish—so much so, I'm told, that Lady Galinda Raventree once attended a nobles' party clad only in her thigh-high Sulmest boots!

Proprietor: Darion Sulmest, the sarcastic and handsome spokesman for his guild, is the proprietor. He is a touch snobbish but always interested in tales of adventuring. <sup>26</sup>

#### Tavenns

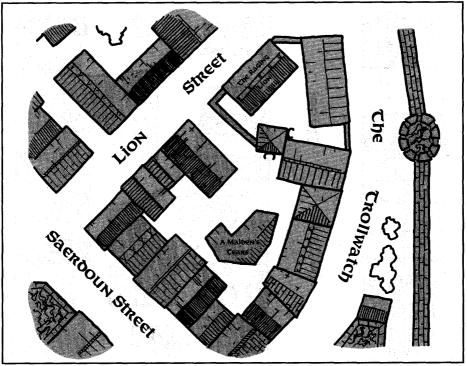
A Maiden's Tears

!!!! 0000

No tavern in this ward competes in prices with those elsewhere drink is dear, and rowdiness strongly discouraged. Nobles with a taste for brawling, color, or danger walk to more southerly wards for their fun. This place, named for the old Sword Coast legend that the best wine is the tears of a maiden whose suitor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Location #111 on the color map.





turns away (or is slain), is quieter than most.

Soft lighting, deftly quiet service, and curtained booths make this a perfect and popular place for meetings—both for private intrigue, and encounters with ladies of the evening. Once you're seated, it is rare to even see other patrons, and the snoring betrays just how many unhappy nobles come here to drink zzar until they fall asleep.

The Tears is rated highly for its privacy and quiet. Some will find it a excrutiatingly boring place to lift a cup.

Zzar is 4 cp/jack. Wines go up

from there to 20 gp/glass for Tashlutan dragonstongue. No menu is offered, but all drink orders include complimentary salted crackers, garlic-and-cheesemelt breads, and celery.

*Proprietress:* Zobia Shrinsha is the proprietress. She is quiet, watchful, and shy—like a little girl speaking to strangers.<sup>27</sup>

# The Grinning Lion

!!!! 00

Tucked away inside a block of homes and businesses just north of the big bend in Golden Ser-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Location #154 on the color map.



pent Street, this place, adorned with battle trophies (or faked battle trophies) from all over Faerun is as raucous as taverns get in North Ward. An old joke claims the Riven Shield Shop sends all shields beyond repair here, to hang on the walls.

The music is loud, with male and female dancers in fantastically styled and revealing mock armor swaying and pirouetting among the tables. Real, if broken, weapons hang on the walls everywhere, so disputes are swiftly discouraged by the bouncers. Grasping a patrons upper lip is an effective way to tow him to the door, one told me.

Food consists only of platters of fried onions and eels. I'm told you get to enjoy them, but I couldn't get past the revolting look and smell.

Folk really come here to drink—and drink they do, copiously at a price of 3 cp/tankard of zzar and upwards. Most wine is 2 sp/glass.

I'm told that a certain fat man on a stool at one end of the bar can help visitors buy and sell goods that are rather "warm." The only such patron I spoke to was very rude and emphatic in his rejections.

*Proprietor:* Unger Farshal, who owns and runs the Grinning Lion, is bald, close-mouthed, and dangerous-looking.<sup>28</sup>

#### lnns

#### The Cliffwatch

**!!!** BBB

At the northeast corner of Endcliff Lane and Nindabar Street stands this rambling old inn—recognizable for its exterior galleries. These are continuous balconies running the entire length of the outside, a feature seen in Dock Ward and South Ward, but rarely in this well-to-do district. By night, find it by going to the Endcliff Tower on the city wall, and head west down the narrowest lane you can see. It's on the first corner on your right.

Inside, it's well worn, even shabby—but the cheerful, understanding keeper makes up for this. He's quick to hide warm goods or wanted folk, direct adventurers or visitors to where the oddest things can be found in the vast city, and to chat about rumors, treasure tales, and doings in the city in the old overstuffed armchairs in front of his roaring fireplace. For folk wanting only a comfortable, home-like place to stay; this is one of the best lodgings in the city.

Oh, by the way, tales of secret passages leading down to smugglers' storage cellars and thence to navigable reaches of the cellars are true. But the kindly

Location #135 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Location #156 on the color map.



keeper advised me not on investigate too far unless I felt confident of my ability to defeat a beholder!

*Proprietor:* The amiable, but otherwise unremarkable, proprietor of the Cliffwatch is Felstan Spindrivver.

# The Galloping Minotaur

Widely known among travelers, this inn has begun to slip in its service, relying on its name and convenient location for market vendors and for shoppers to keep its rooms full. And they are full; it's rare to find lodgings here, because the keeper has instituted the city's first system of advance bookings. Merchants valuing the guarantee of a place to stay in the city have gone for it to such an extent that the Minotaur has expanded to take in a former warehouse behind and a storetront beside the original inn. The cheaper rooms are located in the former warehouse, above the stables and below the servants.

Inside, this place is all bustle. Errandboys and newslungs (youths who arrive every hour or so, and for a handful of coppers from the innkeeper bellow out the current news to all in the salon) are always coming and going, merchants full of their own importance are always striding in all directions ("at

once," as one serving maid dryly put it), and the mutter of business dealings fills the entire ground floor. The ground floor is given over to a lobby, the salon, and four private, rentable meeting rooms. The salon is an open lounge used by most guests and those they have dealings with. Servants tend the private rooms by means of passages behind the paneled walls in answer to the tug of a bellpull. Be warned that they can easily eavesdrop on what goes on within. All in all, a noisy, overpriced place—rather like paying high gold to sleep in an army camp.

Proprietor: Waendel Uthrund, a beady-eyed, sardonic man who is always alert, is the proprietor.

# The Raging Lion

This little-known, fine old inn is highly recommended. Dominated by dark wood paneling, thick but worn carpets underfoot everywhere, and a strict rule against open flames of any sort including smoking, it is a quiet refuge from the bustle of the city being as close to the east wall as one can get. Light is provided by an assortment of *glowing globes* of different hues.

Dwarves and at least three bands of lady adventurers have adopted this place. Some live here

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Location #110 on the color map. <sup>31</sup>Location #153 on the color map.



permanently, helping the proprietor keep order, and others use it as a base between expeditions into the northern Sword Coast. The Swordmaidens in particular are an impressive sight as they stride through the halls or dining room in full armor.

All rooms have their own bath and garderobe, and all have doors that can be locked and barred from within. All have locking bar-grates on the windows that can be swung up out of the way from within only. All have canopied four-poster beds of the sort usually reserved for nobility or royalty.

The ground floor is given over to kitchens and to a dining room where one can choose between beef, pork, or goat stews nightly each available either highly spiced as favored in the South or more moderately seasoned (which is more to my taste—I like to taste what I'm eating first, and the spices second).

During my meal, I found something that led to a very interesting adventure—about which I'll say only that in the better wards of Waterdeep, always check the underside of any chair or stool you sit in (if, and only if, you can do this unobserved by others!). Messages, coins, gems, weapons, and other valuable objects are often stuck, wedged, or fitted into recesses there for someone to pick up at a later time.

Two dwarves seem to live in the dining room, whittling little chains and lock mechanisms from various exotic woods, and sipping beer as they while each day away. I believe they take messages from dwarves, to pass on to other dwarves who come here to find them. Their names are Ilmairen and Jaerloon. They merely smiled when I asked their clan. They told me many interesting tales of the city in exchange for a tankard or two—including some things about a curious cult, embraced by some nobles of Waterdeep, that once used this inn as a place of worship.

Their femple still exists, as a cellar now crowded with casks, potatoes, mushroom frames and the like, but it was once a place of frenzied dancing and sacrificial offerings to Kambadlan, the Black Tortoise of Night. I must admit I laughed at this, but after I was shown the temple and the burnt bones still on its altar, my mirth left me hurriedly.

This is the origin of the seldom-heard Waterdhavian oaths: "By the Black Tortoise!" and "By the shell of Kambadlan!" The cult is now extinct—I believe. Yet something of its dark and dangerous mystery still clings to this old place—or perhaps some other plots lurk here?

Proprietor: The tall but stout proprietor of the Raging Lion, Lhaerhlin Masram, is impassivefaced but affable.



### Alleys

North Ward's alleys are by far the safest of any ward of Waterdeep. Children have been known to safely play unattended in them on bright moonlit nights. Lantern guides tend to be lone men or youths and sometimes even maids, and the alleys have a reputation more as a place for drunks to snore away the night undisturbed, than places to be avoided due to danger.

#### Black Dog Alley

J This are

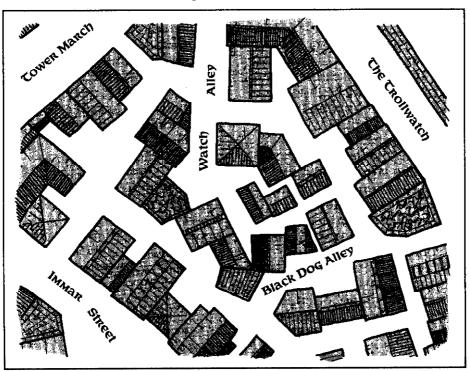
This short way circles around the interior of a block of buildings

due south of Farwatch Tower, linking up with Watch Alley. It is named for the silent phantom of a black dog that is seen padding steadily along here on many nights. The hound wears a spiked hunting or war collar, stands as tall a goat, and has blazing red eyes. It looks at no one directly and simply walks through people and objects alike.

#### Catchthief Alley



This short, narrow passage runs north off Golden Serpent Street, along the east wall of the Helmfast noble family villa com-





pound.<sup>32</sup> Its name comes from its site as the downfall of the infamous thief Uluryk Malogh, who was slain by a hail of poisoned arrows here many winters ago after he killed the heads of two noble houses in a tavern brawl and taunted their kin by revealing himself as an agent of the banished Thieves Guild, who had been ordered to bring about their doom.

He escaped into the sewers and cellars of the city which he knew as few others do, but the Guild thought him insane and a risk to themselves, and sent agents into the city to slay him. The agents of the Guild caught him in this alley. Some folk swear they have heard the ghostly bubbling whisper of his last words, pronouncing a curse on all traitors, and lamenting that the poison *burns* so.

There are persistent rumors that he made an extensive map of the cellars and sewers, detailing traps, barriers, and locks. If it exists, it has never come to light.

The alley is also notable for the fact that much of it was once destroyed by a wyrm bursting up from below! There is an old legend in the city of a dozen or more dragonets that once hatched early and ate their way to freedom, escaping from an importer of dragon eggs into the city sewers. They dined on rats, thieves, and other skulking

monsters, growing slowly in size and powers. This tale has probably grown a great deal in the telling, but a single dragon undeniably broke out of some cellar, cell, or sewer below the widest part of this alley some 70 winters ago and flew away over the city to escape into the nearby mountains to the north. Its origin, if it was learned at the time, has been forgotten.

#### Manycats Alley

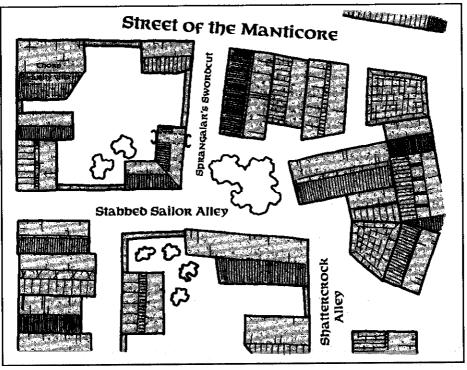
B

This way crosses two city blocks and winds through the interior of a third, running between and for the most part parallel to Julthoon Street and Traders' Way. It passes just to the south of the Adarbrent noble family villa, and is notable not only for the many cats that roam it (for which it is named), dining on leavings from several butcher shops located along its run, but also for the many carved stone heads that adorn buildings along the alley.

The carved heads are of both sexes and many races and are very lifelike—leading some fanciful folk to claim they are petrified, severed heads of onceliving beings. Whatever their origin, it is widely believed in the city that the heads speak aloud from time to time, uttering cryptic messages.

Location #144 on the color map.





#### Shattercrock Alley

This short alleyway circles south from Stabbed Sailor Alley only to meet with it again, encircling the Margaster noble family villa. It is named for a famous incident, many summers ago, when a wizard—Phantamos of the Purple Cloak, who went on to become mighty in Art, a legend across the North—was learning to fly by means of magic and swooped wildly through a huge cart of crockery being pushed along this alley to make delivery to a shop here. For many years a tavern, the

Wizard with Wings, backed onto this alley fronting on Suldoun Street, but it burned down of suspicious causes a decade ago. A fine shop offering spectacular hats, wigs, and body-manes to ladies stands on the site now.

#### Stabbed Sailor Alley



This alleyway links Vhezoar Street with Whaelgond Way. At its midpoint stands a clump of magnificent shadowtop trees of great age and height (some 90'), that shade the streets around and provide a home to nesting birds.

<sup>34</sup> Location #129 on the color map.



This alley links with Shattercrock Alley and is linked to the Street of the Manticore to the north by a tiny alleyway known as Sprangalar's Swordcut.

The Swordcut and Stabbed Sailor got their names in the aftermath of a bloody street fight, years back, when citizens fought with followers of the Cult of the Dancing Bear and either destroyed it or drove it underground.35 The alleyway is a busy but safe delivery route today. Its shade makes it a favorite stroll on hot, sunny days.

#### Trollskull Alley

A narrow, little-known passage winding through the interior of a city block just north of, and parallel to, the eastern end of Delzorin Street, this alley's deadend is a favorite night haunt of

gambling gangs-bored, wealthy youths who waste their money on dares and games of chance. By day it is safe and crowded with carts of garbage and delivered goods for the businesses that back onto it. By night, it is the turf of aggressive youths of both sexes—who often pelt the city watch with stones.

#### Watch Alley



A short passage that runs due south from Farwatch Tower before looping back to meet itself, this lane serves as an assembly point for city watch patrols and a quick route south for themhence its name. It is as safe as an alley can be, except for a curious thing, as yet unexplained: From time to time, single, severed, bloody bare human feet are found lying in it.

<sup>35</sup>The Cult of the Dancing Bear was born seven or more generations ago, when Waterdeep celebrated the Festival of Dancing Bears once a year. This barbarian custom preceded the city—the nomadic human tribes of the north simply shifted the place of their annual gathering to Waterdeep.

During the festival, the barbarians came down to the city with pelts and horns to sell and trinkets, good swords, and much beer to buy. They danced far into the night, and the greatest of their dances was the Dance of the Bear. In this dance, a hunter danced with a captured bear, holding its attention (and claws) by skill and stratagems so it would not menace the crowd around. The hunter wore bear-claw gloves tipped with a drug, and if the bear was scratched deeply enough, it would be affected, falling ever so slowly asleep. Many hunters were killed in this dangerous dance, and Waterdhavian worshippers of Malar took it up after the barbarians stopped coming, dancing with a trained bear or even a man wearing the preserved pelt, claws, and head of a bear.

The Cult of the Dancing Bear is presently led by Urinborm, who is secretly a specialty priest of Malar, as detailed in the FORGÖTTEN REALMS® Adventures hardcover sourcebook, and is a small, under ground faith. Its followers are marked, usually on some part of their body normally hidden by clothing, by the parallel scars of the raking claws of the bear. The faithful meet secretly at least once a month, usually in a cellar somewhere in the city. Rituals involve drinking the blood of animals, dancing with the Bear (Urinborm,in costume), dedicating any hunting activities to the Bear, and mock-fighting fellow cult members with bare hands and teeth until blood is drawn. Cult members are trained in aggressive attacking behavior, and to enjoy a bloodlust. They fiercely avenge any slight or attack on any member of their fellowship, and try to run down in a hunt by night at least one visitor to the city a year.

<sup>36</sup>Elminster says this is an old Thieves Guild punishment, and may herald their return to the city. It

comes, he said dryly, from a bad pun about defeating your opponents.







# Trade Wand



f all the wards in Waterdeep, this ward has the least community feel. You certainly can't tell by

walking through the streets where it ends and South Ward or Dock Ward begins.

Trades Ward is almost entirely given over to commerce. Middleclass workers and merchants dwell and ply their trades there. The ward wraps around most of the City of the Dead, running out from its walls along Andamaar's Street to the High Road, down that broad street to Snail Street, and down Snail Street to Shesstra's Street, where it turns east. The boundary jogs south at Book Street to Drakiir Street, runs east along it to the Way of the Dragon, keeps to the north side of Telshambra's Street as it runs on east to the High Road, and there jogs north again to turn east at Sahtvra's Lane. It takes in Caravan Court and then follows Belzor's Walk northeast to the city wall. The city wall, and those of the City of the Dead, make up the

Inside this area are many

rest of its boundaries.

landmarks the visitor won't want to miss. Besides, it's almost impossible to travel anywhere in Waterdeep without passing through Trades Ward. Its streets are always busy. On dark nights, so many lighters are at work here that it looks like a sea of bobbing stars from afar.

Watch patrols are very frequent. The protection of property is paramount in this ward—theft and vandalism are the worst evils. Crowding, pushing, shoving, and cursing are commonplace at the day's height.

#### Landmarks

The congested streets make walking while looking up in this ward—or even stopping for a good look—hazardous at most times of day. This is quite a pity, because there's a lot to see.

The first thing that strikes one's eye is the tallest building: the Plinth, a temple at which all faiths can pray. No person can be barred entry from it. In fact, in winter its warmth keeps a lot of poorer citizens alive.

This mighty tower stands like a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> City watch patrols are detailed on page 17 of FR1 Waterdeep and the North. In this ward, four-sword patrols pass a given point about every 10 minutes and look into a tavern or inn dining room every 30 minutes. As detailed on pages 18,19 and 23 of the City System book, six-man city guard detachments also patrol the ward. Typical patrol details are given therein on page 23. Reinforcements will be a dozen LG hm F3s to F6s in chain mail and armed with maces, long swords, slings, daggers, and a polearm. Guard patrols pass a given street location every 45 minutes or so, and appear 1d10 minutes after a city watch patrol blows a warning horn in this ward.



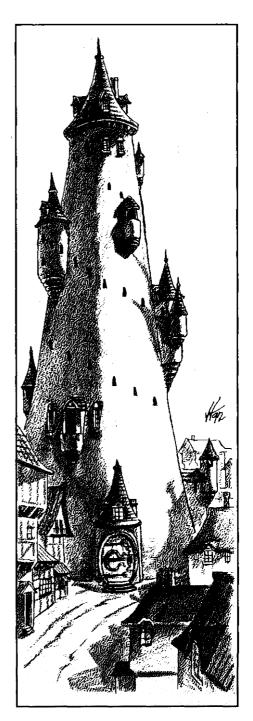
needle-like, tall and thin pyramid with the top cut off. The flat roof is a landing place for aerial steeds used by the wealthy and powerful. At many levels on the Plinth's sides are balconies. City laws forbid sacrifices of intelligent beings to any god, but a lot of folk leap or are helped to fall from these heights each year.

The next most prominent features of the ward are three open spaces—the Court of the White Bull, where livestock is bought and sold; Caravan Court, which is usually a dust-shrouded melee of cursing whip-wielding drovers, bawling beasts of burden, and creaking wagons and carts; and Virgin's Square, where warriors gather to await hire.

There are plenty of inns and taverns in this ward, but aside from the Plinth, no temples. There are also countless shops, most rising three floors above the street, with apartments above the stores—but only one mage's tower.<sup>2</sup> I'm sure many wizards of middling powers dwell here, but there's only one of power and wealth enough to erect a traditional wizard's tower who has elected to stay in Trades Ward.

The main feature of this ward are the many guildhalls—a wearying list of places that vie

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mhair's Tower, home of Mhair Szeltune, Lady Master (head) of the Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors (Waterdeep's wizards' guild) is location #171 on the color map. It's a conical stone tower on the east side of Spindle Street with an oval, mithril and copper front door.





for the attention of passersby with large replicas of whatever goods the guild produces, gilded lettering, and grand facades. These are working headquarters, and many folk travel a long way to get inside them, to deal with the guilds. The guildhalls are: the Citadel of the Arrow headquarters of the Fellowship of Bowyers & Fletchers; Costumers' Hall, of the Order of Master Taylors, Glovers, & Mercers; the House of Song, of the Council of Musicians, Instrument-Makers, and Choristers; the Office of the League of Basketmakers & Wickerworkers; and the House of Cleanliness, of the Launderers' Guild.

This ward is also home to the Old Guildhall, headquarters to the Cellarers and Plumbers Guild;8 the Zoarstar, headquarters of the Scriveners, Scribes, and Clerks Guild; the House of Textiles, of the Most Excellent Order of Weavers and Dyers; the Guild Paddock, of the Stablemasters' and Farriers' Guild; Cobblers' & Corvisers' House;<sup>12</sup> the house of light, of the Guild

of Chandlers & Lamplighters;<sup>13</sup> Stationers' Ha11;<sup>14</sup> and Wheel Hall, of the Wheelwrights' Guild.

The Zoarstar, in particular, is always crowded. Aside from all those who need letters written, gawkers are always peering through the windows at the maps, charts, and architectural renderings on display on easels at its front. One such map is always an overall view of the city as a kindness to visitors. Go there if you get lost. The Zoarstar is on the northwest corner of Quill Alley and Wide Way northwest of the Court of the White Bull.

Shoppers should explore at night in a leisurely manner with a lighter and a group of armed friends, then traverse the ward in an organized shopping route by day. It's often said you can buy anything in Waterdeep. A walk around Trades Ward will have you believing that. (I'll admit I let the "guaranteed" unicat familiar go even before its illusory unicorn horn started to fade. It stopped clawing me and hurried back to its shop to be sold again.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Location #174 on the color map.

Location #176 on the color map.

Location #181 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Location #183 on the color map.

Location #185 on the color map.

Location #186 on the color map.

Location #189 on the color map. Location #190 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Location #195 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Location #199 on the color map.

Location #200 on the color map.

Location #202 on the color map.

<sup>15</sup> Location #205 on the color map. In all cases, the guild owning the headquarters, and something of its doings, fees, and current heads, is covered in the Waterdeep and the North sourcebook.



# The Bowels of the Earth

Tavern

!!! 00

This rough, rowdy tavern stands on the southeast corner of the intersection of Snail Street and Simples Street, just west of Virgins Square. 16 It is a cheap but cozy dive popular with mercenaries and adventurers. If you're a mercenary or an adventurer or are looking to meet or hire one or the other, you must go to this place—if you're male, that is, and look like you'd be trouble for someone in a fight. Lady adventurers are usually bold enough to go in—but they sometimes have to empty the place with their fists or spells to win the respect they need to stay and enjoy themselves untroubled!

#### The Place

The Bowels is an old stone building that leans noticeably to the north into Simples Street. The windows are covered with stout wooden shutters, barred from within, because they long ago lost all their glass and screens. The tavern fronts on Snail Street, where its hanging signboard vividly depicts a pile of manure

transfixed by a spade. Local children and drovers alike play an old, old game by flinging spadefuls and handfuls of dung at the sign, trying to make it stick to where the pile is painted.

## The Prospect

Inside, the Bowels of the Earth is chiefly memorable for being *dark*. Hooded candlelamps at each table provide the only illumination. It's easy to imagine a blade being drawn in stealthy silence and sliding in and out of a man's ribs without warning until he crashes forward onto his table—and I'm sure it's happened here a time or two. The place is a haunt of the Shadow Thieves, it's said, the place where the thief Moriath of the Company of Crazed Venturers met his end at their hands. <sup>17</sup>

There are several private, rentable rooms off the taproom. They are Spartan cubicles furnished only with lamps hanging on chains above built-in benches and tables. Behind the bar are the kitchens, and beside it is a door leading to the alley behind the tavern. Stairs lead up to a cesspit/jakes at the back of the place, a set of former bedrooms crammed with stores, and a dust-filled attic. Stairs behind the bar lead down to a low-ceilinged cellar crowded with kegs as tall

<sup>16</sup> This place is #198 on the color city map.

<sup>17</sup> For more about this tavern, see Blazidon One-Eye's entry on page 50 of FR1 Waterdeep and the North and the adventure entitled "The Unmourned Passing of Roungoze Haballanter" on page 64. Blazidon owns the Bowels of the Earth and often sleeps in its attic.



as a man and about as fat around as any four men. Even before you find the trapdoor behind them, you can smell that this place is connected to the sewers.

So why do adventurers, who can often afford better, come to this dump? Well, the prices are low well-banked fires keep it warm in winter, and in the close darkness there are always tales being told back and forth—tales of taming and flying dragons, of hewing liches and baatezu limb from limb, and withstanding the hurled magic of archmages or beholders. The listener can visit far, exotic corners of Toril—from fabled Evermeet to the chill ice of the Great Glacier, and from the

depths of the Deep Realm of the dwarves to the unrelenting heat of Zakhara, the Land of Fate without ever leaving the safety of his or her chair.

But more importantly than that, listening quietly and perhaps smoking in the darkness are usually one or more who have come to hire adventurers or simply mercenary swords for a task. They sit, and listen, take their measure of the speaker, and may lay down a coin for a hiresword to take up and so enter their service.

#### The Provender

Food in the Bowels is simple fare: coarse, rich dark rye bread in





circular loaves, served to accompany slabs of cheese, sausage, and fowl pate. There's also soup—usually a thick concoction of peas and lentils simmered with all the meat scraps, fat, and bones that have come within reach of the place.

To wash all that down, there's lots to drink—in quantity. The selection isn't great. All that burns going down and isn't well thought of can be had, but if you want fancy wines, walk elsewhere.

## The People

Regular patrons are hard to recognize in the darkness— which is just as well for the city guard undercover agent who's usually listening here or for Mirt the Moneylender, the colorful and stout ex-mercenary. 18

The bald-headed proprietor wears a gold earring and is almost as wide as he is tall (in other words, about five feet in each direction). His biceps are as large around as a fat man's thigh! This gentle giant is capable of snatching an unruly guest off his feet one-handed and hurling him across the taproom to strike the door so hard that it flies open

and he sails out a good 10 feet into the street—and bounces. No wild tale—I saw this myself. This bartender, Ongamar Talthloon, is (thankfully!) slow to anger.

#### The Prices

Drink goes by the tankard: 1 copper for rough ale, 3 coppers for good ale, 7 cp for zzar, and 1 sp to 6 sp for wine and spirits, depending on quality. A plate of food is 1 cp. A bowl of soup is 1 cp, but free with a plate of food.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Bowels of the Earth has so many tales connected to it that I could fill another book this size, but there's one that every traveler finds interesting: The tavern has been owned by more than one wizard in the past—and it's said in the city that there's still magical treasure hidden in the place somewhere. Many folk have stealthily cast detection spells—only to find that the entire place radiates strong magical auras—layer upon layer, so that a dispel magic doesn't clear things! So far, only one magical ring has been found—in the bottom of one of the wine kegs, when it rotted through.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>You won't find Mirt, or Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun either, for that matter, in the "Folk of Waterdeep" appendix at the back of this book. Elminster refused to say anything about either of them. He did say something like, "The safety of all the Realms is too important to jeopardize just to sate thy curiosity."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Try chipping into the stone roof pillars that hold up the ceilings in the taproom and cellar, Elminster advised sarcastically with a grin. Just one small matter, he added: Remember that they're holding the place up, and you're in it! Oh, another warning: The pillars reflect back all magic cast at them, 100% on the source.



## The lun of the Dripping Dagger

Tavern & Inn

## !!! DOOO YYY

This cozy old inn stands on the east side of the High Road, south of Selduth Street and north of the Coffinmarch. It's well-known as the favorite watering hole and resting place for hireswords, and has a reputation for jovial horseplay that keeps the more timid merchants and pilgrims away from its doors.

#### The Place

This tavern has a fieldstone street-level floor pierced by a few squat, iron-barred arched windows. A row of iron and amberglass lamps run along its front, illuminating the hanging dripping dagger signboard and the entry door, which is covered with many bloodstains and weapon scars. The owner used to leave all the weapons that had sunk into it in place as grisly bristling adornment, but they started proving too handy for those wishing to snatch up a weapon and work a little mayhem, and the city watch asked him to remove them.

The timber upper floors have necessitated a no smoking/no fires rule except in the taproom. They contain two floors of

comfortable rooms, an attic with a secret closet for hiding incriminating things (such as bodies) from the city watch, and a flat roof with several carved stone griffons on it, which serve to give pigeons something to adorn and people using the roof to look for the watch or just to enjoy the city view something to lean against. If folk visiting the Dripping Dagger use aerial steeds, the griffons have rings set into them for the easy tethering of mounts.

There is a stable behind and a little south of the inn reached by a passage off Spindle Street, and a few gnarled old trees that one can relax under. This back alley is frequently full of fighting men

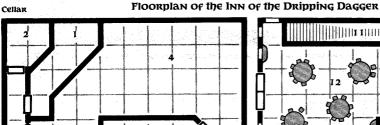
at practice.

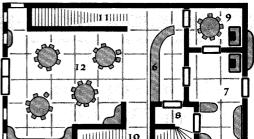
## The Prospect

Inside, the inn has a dark, low-ceilinged taproom like many a tavern. A stair beside the bar leads up to the inn rooms, and there is a private dining room around behind the stairs that has been used for many war councils and private business meetings down through the years.

The place is simple, but comfortably furnished and welcoming. The warrior guests seem to relax completely here, and laugh, joke, and play at dice, cards, or board games with easy, lazy enjoyment. Songs and play-acting, wherein one hairy warrior gets

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>This place is #168 on the color city map.

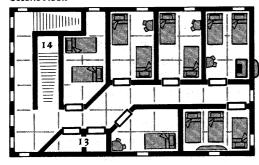




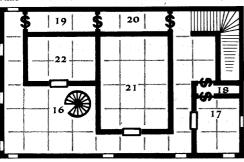
Street Level

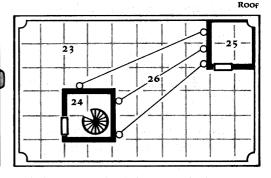
Third Floor

Second Floor



Attic





- ı Ladies' Jakes
- 2 Mens' Jakes
- 3 Stairs From Taproom
- 4 Storage Cellar (Wine Casks, Broken Furniture, etc.)
- 5 Strongroom (Stains from Pantry connect here; also, via secret boors, there is access here to the navigable sewers of Waterbeep
- 6 Bar
- 7 Kitchen
- s Pantry (Stairs to Cellar)
- 9 Private Dining Room
- 10 Stains to Cellan (Jakes)
- 11 Stains to Upper Floors
- 12 Таркоом
- 13 Linen Closets
- 14 Stairs to Upper Floors
- 15 Stairs to Attic

- 16 IRON Spiral Stain to Roof
- 17 Office
- 18 Secret Closet (Weapons Storage)
- 19 Secret Storage
- 20 Secret Storage
- 21 Storage Room
- 22 Storage Room
- 23 Flat Roof
- 24 Penthouse
- 25 Storage Hut (Awnings)/ Chicken Coop (for Fresh Eggs, Daily)
- 26 Washing Lines

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet







Door |



Сђімпеу



up and lisps and flirts his way through an imitation of a noble lady or mimics a pompous merchant met during the day, are common.

Laughter rings often around this taproom. I can see why guests love this place so and become regulars. Those who are not fighting men are greeted affably and treated with courtesy rather than being made to feel unwelcome or out of place. On my first visit, I saw three hulking mercenaries on their knees on the floor solemnly playing orc

## Welcome to the Dripping Dagger

All Prices are per Person, per Platter or Bowl

Till Trices are per Terso	ni, per i miler or bowi
For The Hungry Roast Ox (cooked with onions or leeks—garlic optional)	Lighter Fare Cold Meats (served with lettuce or endive)
(Salt pork chunks 1 cp extra)	Whiskey 1 sp 1 gp
breading nests): Goose 5cp	Elverquisst
Duck 5 cp	Drinkables 1 sp 1 gp
Chicken 4cp	1 01
Exotic Fowl (when available) 6 cp	



squash with a little boy as his mother looked on in pleased amazement.

#### The Provender

The menu at the Dripping Dagger is typical for a good inn, and I've reproduced it in full here (page 113). I would hope that those planning to open their own establishments elsewhere will take their measure of its simple breadth and prices!

### The People

The proprietor is Filiare, a jovial, middle-aged ex-mercenary who's Blazidon One-Eye's chief competitor in the business of getting mercenaries hired. Many folk come here seeking hireswords in a hurry and Filiare is known to all and trusted by most. He has lots of spare weapons and gear given to him by fighting men who never came back or who paid him in goods when they lacked coin, which he will sell or rent to adventurers. He has also known to trim his prices a bit for guests thin in the purse.

Filiare presides over a staff of four waitresses, four chambermaids, six kitchenfolk, and four hostlers (in the stable behind).

#### The Prices

Food prices are as given on the menu. A room rents for 5 sp/day from highsun to highsun, with stabling included, or 20 sp/

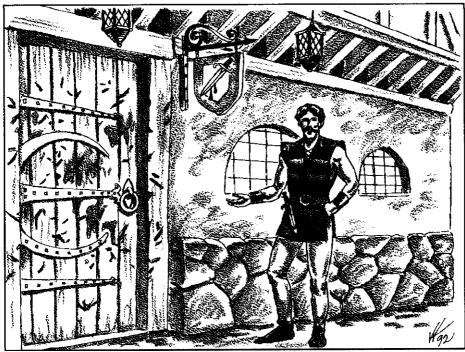
tenday. Bedroll (bunking on the floor of the attic with others) is 1 sp/night. A bowl of soup, a mug of ale, and a round loaf of bread are included with bedroll service.

#### Travelers' Lore

Many famous mercenaries and companies have stayed here while in Waterdeep. By common consent, the inn is neutral ground where rivals and sworn enemies stay amicably—or at least tolerantly—together. Before they built their own keep (since destroyed), the Company of Crazed Venturers lived here, and it was always their favorite place to drink. Longtime regulars still talk about the time they used a wish spell to teleport back from disaster in a nearby dungeon and shattered the bar with their arrival. Unfortunately they appeared without any of their equipment—and closely followed by their *teleporting* foes! (If you should meet with a former member of the Company this is not a good topic to discuss.)

Many other tales are linked to the Dripping Dagger, but I'll tell only one other. Alusair Nacacia, princess of Cormyr, when still a slip of a girl, gave her lady attendants and guards the slip while her father was meeting with Piergeiron. She wandered in here and was happily playing with the warriors in the taproom while the city watch and city guard were frantically turning the city





upside down searching for her and dreading having to report her disappearance to Khelben to get magical aid in tracing her whereupon her father was sure to hear of her disappearance. After the Daggers patrons had mock-wrestled with her, tossed her from hand to hand until she was quite winded, let her sip strong things that she'd always been forbidden to taste, and disarmed her and showed her how to do it to someone else, they were in the midst of showing her how to throw daggers when the city watch came in. It's a good thing the watch's lead officer was swift—Alusair had just flung a dagger at the battered inside of

the front door when he opened it. The most astonishing thing, he remarked later, was that no one in the Dagger knew that she was a princess.

Her fathers later dry comment was that the most astonishing thing (to him) was the number of unsuitable jokes and sayings she'd learned in a brief hour or so. Her lifelong habit of muttering "Stop me vitals!" under her breath comes from this childhood visit to the Inn of the Dripping Dagger. When she turned up missing much later in life, the first place Cormyrean agents in Waterdeep were ordered to check was (of course) the Inn of the Dripping Dagger.



## Other Places of Interest in Trades Ward

In the crowded streets and byways of the Trades Ward, the determined shopper or enterprising merchant can spend a summer or two without poking his nose everywhere or doing business with everyone. I've done my best to set down here some of the shops and sights of universal interest—or at least those of note to the casual passerby rather than to the dedicated shopper.

Earlier, I spoke of such landmarks as the Plinth and the open squares and courtyards—and it bears repeating that to visit the closest thing Waterdeep has to a bazaar (an open air market, crowded with many everchanging stalls) the Court of the White Bull is your place. It's named, by the way for a now-vanished tavern, famous in its day that sprawled over much of where the court now lies and was destroyed in a mighty explosion in the infamous battle between the archmage Thongalar the Mighty and the evil mage Shile Rauretilar and his apprentices.

In the spellstorm that befell here, Shile and his apprentices all perished, and the very fabric of Faerun was rent, so that Azuth the One appeared to set things right. Even today, it is said that magic sometimes goes awry in the Court—and for that reason, magic items, scrolls, components, and demonstrations are all forbidden in the Court?

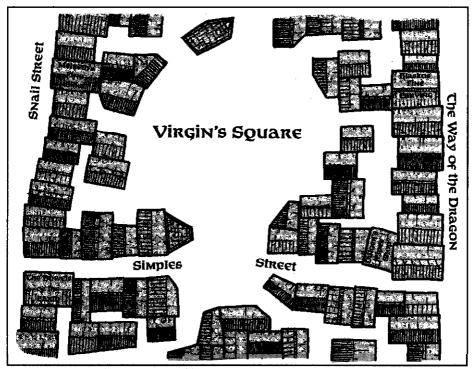
The White Bull tavern was in turn named for an albino bull born on this spot to an astonished caravan owner in the days when this area was an open field for livestock and caravan assembly. He took it as a good omen.

Caravan Court, to the south, is a popular spot for loafers and old men to sit (many bring stools or crates for the purpose) and watch men sweat and curse, animals bellow and thunder about, and the generally frenzied, of ten dangerous, activity as caravans are formed or broken up. However, not counting the everpassing confusion of the High Road and the Way of the Dragon—watching those thoroughtares is itself a spectator sport of long tradition—the most interesting of all these open spaces is Virgin's Square.

This space is, of course, not a square at all, but roughly round in shape. Waterdeep's womenfolk often come here to gasp at and give the eye to sinister-looking men from all over Faerun who swagger about Virgin's Square fully armed, hoping to attract

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Treat the Court and the streets for roughly a block around it on all sides as a wild magic area. If your DM lacks the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* sourcebook, he or she simply use the *wand of wonder* table in the *DMG* or devise his or her own random magical effects. Whenever magic is unleashed, it will go wild on a roll of 4 or 8 on a d12.





mercenary employment. Here Blazidon One-Eye sits on a crate most days, matching hireswords with employers.

The square is named for a local legend that tells of virgin men and women being sacrificed long ago to dragons on this site, before there even was a City of Waterdeep. Some Sword Coast barbarian tribes do have legends of a Dragon God that keep them from raiding Waterdeep, where great dragons are said to lair on Mount Waterdeep. According to these folk, if they ever fall under the gaze of the Waterdeep dragons, the wyrms will come devouring among them to make up for all

the virgins not given to them down the ages since the nomadic barbarians stopped coming here. Interestingly, there are much newer legends in the city of dragon hoards hidden somewhere in Mount Waterdeep, and still not recovered by either the city guard, which inhabits caverns and passages in the mountain, linked to Castle Waterdeep, or the smugglers who use buried Skullport, below.

There is yet more lore linked to Virgins Square. A mimic once somehow reached it and took the shape of a statue. It remained undetected for two winters until the continuing disappearances of



street drunks in the square on every dark night prompted an investigation. The statue seemed strangely unfamiliar to the sculptor who had fashioned it—and a sewer beside it was discovered to be completely filled (to a depth of over 60 feet) with the real statue—covered by a huge heap of bones!

This was after two of the city watch, not really expecting to find anything amiss, carelessly prodded the statue with their spears, and in response, it reached out and ate them.

Take a careful look at all the statues you pass, I guess. I'll look at the alleyways of this ward later, after I tell you about some of the buildings here.

#### Homes

The Snookery

This is the house of the noted Captain-at-Arms (weapons tutor) Myrmith Splendon.<sup>22</sup> It's a rambling old place with stone walls and barred windows. Its exterior doors are covered with plating

made from old armor, hammered flat. From inside, there is often a muted din similar to the sounds of a foundry, as Myrmith's students repair weapons they have damaged, or modify those they wield, or simply use them on each other. Some have been known to practice the knack of driving an adamantine sword through armor plate for days.

Here Myrmith trains all who can pay his steep fees in advance<sup>23</sup> in the use of weaponry of all sorts; he has mastered an amazing variety of weapons and has specimens of them all here for daily use.

Those planning on robbing Myrmith's house are warned that no one knows just what he does with his gold, that the snooks (griffon-like animated stone statues, something like gargoyles) which adorn the roof of the house are intelligent and formidable guardians. Not only would robbers have to contend with the snooks, but at least seven magical *flying daggers*<sup>24</sup> also steadfastly guard the place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Location #170 on the color map.

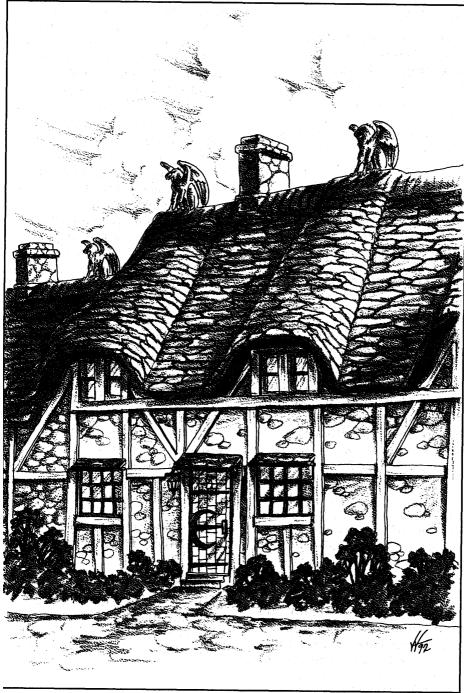
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Myrmith can use any weapon the DM desires and can train a character in the use of it thoroughly or assist warriors in improving their overall battle skills enough to allow them to advance a level in expertise. His fees are 190 gp/level per week. His skill is such that training, even when the house is full of students learning simultaneously, will take the minimum time necessary.

<sup>24</sup> As Myrmith's wigard friends are continued.

As Myrmith's wizard friends are continually experimenting with and improving on the snooks, the DM is free to improve upon the powers of a gargoyle in any way desired. All snooks (there are at least 6 active at all times) are LN in alignment, and unshakably loyal to Myrmith. Even magic cannot turn them against him

Flying daggers are fully detailed on page 115 of the Campaign Guide to Undermountain book (in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set). Myrmith's version of these self-animated flying weapons are AC5; MV Fl21 (A); HD 1+1; hp 9; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4; get no attack bonuses but are considered +2 magical weapons for purposes of what they can hit; cannot be affected by any type of magical or psionic control except by Myrmith; and are immune to magic missile spells and all lightning or electrical-based magic, which they reflect back 100% on the source!







## Shops

#### Aurora's Realms Shop "High Road" Catalogue Counter

This is the Trades Ward outlet of the famous Faerun-wide all goods retail chain. Located on the northwest corner of the meeting of the Street of the Tusks and the High Road, this shop has six guards (shifts of three and three), a stout, motherly matron of a counter clerk named Orgula Samshroon, and a tall, kindly service-mage called Dhaunryl Zalimbar.

## Belmonder's Meats

**5 5 5 5** 

This shop is always busy. From when the place opens at dawn to when it closes at dusk, the four counter clerks and five butchers here are kept hopping chopping and wrapping meat for all they're worth to satisfy the endless lines of customers crowding in for fresh meat. By tar the most popular meat counter in the city; Belmonder's has two side counters: one sells skewers of sizzle-cooked meat scraps (a popular walking meal tor those one the go) and the other sells whole sides of meat to buyers for inns, other eateries, noble families, and wealthy folk. At night, a security force of 20 experienced and well-equipped hireswords guards the unloading of meat wagons. A meat wagon arriving in the city is escorted to a warehouse by a city watch patrol and/or a member of the Guild of Butchers. The night runs from warehouses to the various butcher shops have similar escorts.

There are tales of corpses found hanging on hooks in the ice chambers here and murdered men delivered packed in the wagons with the other meat under the ice and straw, but the throngs of shoppers love the place and have never been put off by such outrageous whispers. Smoked and well-aged sides are brought in from Belmonder's own estates northeast of the city near Rassalantar. The butchers will also cut up a carcass for you if you bring one in. This task takes about 20 minutes and costs 3-10 gp, depending on the size and difficulty of the job.

Proprietor: The proprietor, Morathin "Hooks" Belmonder, is a burly hearty man with a strong stomach and a good eye for meat. He is Second Knife of, and public contact for, the Guild of Butchers.

#### The Golden Horn Gambling House

This ornately gilded palace of gleaming black polished marble stands on the east side of Snail Street, dominating the curve

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Location #188 on the color map.



where it sweeps sharply east near its northern end. 26

I could barely see inside this place—and what I could see was red and plush: red carpet, red sofas, red cushions, dancing girls wearing sheer red silk gowns (that were high cut and low cut!), and even a red-painted ceiling.

The lamplight is kept dim, I suspect, to hide as much of the cheating from the customers as possible. If any notice and object, the 16 bodyguards in the place converge like thirsty stirges, and the disturbance is quickly and quietly removed.

My advice to those who don't enjoy losing great sums of money is to stick to the four-hand card and dice games where you play against the house and three other patrons. And try to find out early on which one of the other patrons is the house antic (undercover agent)! It's worth one visit, just to be overwhelmed by all the red coziness—and to see the sensual dancing.

If you do win big—once a year or so someone does, I'm told—you'll have the mystery contents of the golden horn, which hangs above the huge open hearth, added to your winnings. But be careful: I expect the horn holds coins treated with a slow-acting paralyzing agent or a polymorphed monster, so these folks can quietly get their money back!

*Proprietor:* The Golden Horn's proprietor, Hahstoz Baerhuld, is a dark, silent, expressionless man who seems to glide silently around the place.

#### Thentavva's Boots

5 5 5 5

This old, narrow shop on Vellarr's Lane is adorned with the carved stone images of frolicking nymphs and pegasi. Inside, the crowded interior smells strongly of leather. Here a man considered by some to be the best cobbler in Waterdeep makes custom footwear for all.

His thigh-high, sleek, pointed-toed ladies' boots are famous and eagerly sought after, even at the steep price of 10 gp and the waiting period of at least nine days, but the shop is also full of slippers, walking boots, and the like. Thentavvan work is of the best quality, known for lasting many years and surviving mud and wet well.

*Proprietor:* Thurve Thentavva, the cobbler supreme and proprietor of Thentavva's Boots, is calm, bespectacled, and unflappable.

# Orsabbas's Fine Imports

Here you can pay far too much money for things you never

Location #196 on the color map.Location #177 on the color map.





expected to see on sale in a shop—things from far away in Faerun. This shop caters to the homesick, with perfumed hangings from Calimshan, a spear from Tethyr adorned with the skull of a royal family member, rock rubble from Mirabar, and much, much more.

Nobles needing costumes for feasts often come here to rent or buy authentic pirate garb from the Sea of Fallen Stars, barbarian furs from the far, frozen North, silken robes from Thay, and even Bedine robes and headgarb from the depths of Anauroch. Others come for disguises.

This shop, on Vellarr's Lane just east of the Street of the Tusks, is entered up a steep flight of stone steps. The main floor of the shop, a dozen feet above the street, is adorned with a large, arched window inset with a border of varicolored glass. At night, it

glows slightly due to powerful spells on it that deflect all missiles and blows, preventing its breakage.

Inside, the observant visitor will notice a curious sight on the windowsill: a scattering of small, knobby bones, yellowed with age. They are a legacy of Waterdeep's more lawless days, when most thieves snatched by night, rather than wore guild livery and stole by contract and moneylending.

There was a scything blade trap built into the sill of this window. The trap may still function when set. The present proprietor will not say though he will talk about the bones.

The window's excellent location as a means of entry resulted in more than one late-night scream. On many a morning, the shopkeeper would get up, draw his sword, go downstairs to unset the trap, and open the window—

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Location #179 on the color map.



only to find the remnants of an unlucky or unskilled thief's hand there on the sill.

Orsabbas fills special orders (where customers request specific items from certain places), but the fees are steep, and the wait may be long—as long as an entire season in some cases.

Proprietor: Ildar "the Duke of Darkness" Orsabbas is the proprietor. His nickname comes from the masked, sinister guise he wears to nobles' feasts.

# Riautar's Weaponry

This shop fronts on the High Road just east of the Street of the Tusks<sup>29</sup> and is crowded with an assortment of ready weaponry; most of it secondhand. It is notable as the source of the best arrows, bowstrings, and long bows in Waterdeep, made on the premises by the owner. Their superlative workmanship is admired and coveted by all archers who see them.

A relic of Waterdeep's past can also be seen on the roof of this shop. The crouching, fanged female figure with the spread wings is not a carved ornament, but a petrified harpy. She dates from the long-ago War of Five Wizards, when five mages battled their way across the city in one terrible night, vying for

supremacy in the Wizards' Guild of the time—and destroying most of the city in the process.

This harpy, along with two others, was teleported to Waterdeep from afar by one of the wizards, and another wizard promptly petrified them all. The other two harpies plunged to the street below. There they shattered—and crushed the wizard who had summoned them. It is rumored that some mage in the city frees this harpy to fly—and kill, at his command—from time to time, and then forces her back into her customary pose and stone shape, but this has never been proven to be more than a flight of fancy.

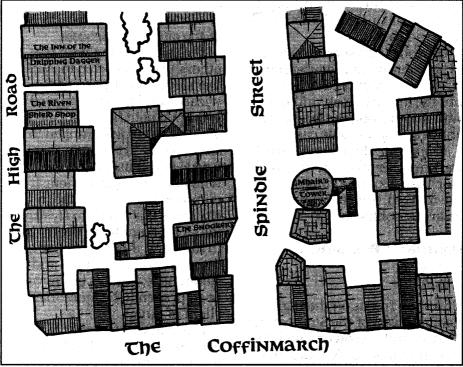
Proprietor: Zarondar "the Nimble" Riautar, public contact for the Fellowship of Bowyers and Fletchers, is the proprietor.

# The Riven Shield Shop

This shop is famous up and down the Sword Coast for its large and varied assortment of secondhand arms and armor—including many famous relics of fallen or retired adventurers. The most famous items are either not for sale, or command very high prices (thousands of gold pieces). There are, however, many serviceable, unhistoried used weapons here, from tiny daggers used

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Location #180 on the color map.





by noble ladies to the heavy broadswords favored by barbarians, that are useful to anyone in need of a weapon. Scores of these sell each day.<sup>30</sup>

No one is tempted to steal the more valuable pieces. It is widely known that some of the magical shields hanging from the rafter beams contain magically imprisoned monsters that can be released to fight as an ally of the shield-wearer. It is also well known that one of the items in the shop (no one is quite sure which one, and the proprietor neglects to say) is an alert, always vigilant, sentinel.

*Proprietor:* Delborggan the Blade runs the Riven Shield Shop. He is a grizzled, one-eyed exadventurer.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Location #169 on the color map. Currently, the shop holds such wonders as the Horrible Hammer of War (functions like a *vampiric ring of regeneration*); the Spear of Lochal, which has some strange magical powers and is believed to be only a part of a larger, more powerful magic item; the Helm of Bolarr, which allows its wearer to see even in pitch darkness and with *infravision* – and to perceive any foe struck by the helm-wearer within the last turn, who is still within 400 yards of the helm, even if the foe is invisible, disguised by magic, has changed form, or is hidden behind a solid barrier; the Shield of Many Meteors, which attracts and harmlessly absorbs all *fireballs*, *minute meteors*, and similar fire magic effects into itself); and many others. The Horrible Hammer of War was wielded by the half-ogre Klarargh Skullbold, leader of the adventuring band known as Wrath Rampant, until he was slain by the city guard while trying to set fire to a tavern in Dock Ward.



# Saern's Fine Swords

This shop stands on the southeastern corner of the meeting of the High Road and Burnt Wagon Way. It's an old, massively built stone place with bars on all the windows, crenelations on the flagstone roof, and a narrow exposed, iron-bound door overlooked by arrow slits—in short, a miniature fortress.

It holds a large stock of swords, including a few made by Szwarharba the Swordsmith, the famous craftsman of Tethyr, who before his death some 90 winters back had learned how to forge blades that could be bent around almost in a circle without breaking or becoming permanently angled out of true. Swords are not made to fit the user here, but they are sharpened (including overall lightening by shaving the blade thickness). The large selection means that most shoppers will be able to find a sword that is reasonably suitable to their reach and strength. A good long sword costs about 20 gp, including the 1 gp city fee, and a fine dagger about 4 gp.

Piergeiron has a deal with the proprietor of this shop: Should the city militia ever need to be called up quickly and reinforced with volunteers needing arms, the city guard will empty the shop of arms, take it over as a rallying post, and pay the owner (who will be allowed to stay in residence with his staff if he desires) 90,000 pieces of gold on the spot.

Few clients know the quietly polite owner of the shop is a warrior, and fewer still know he has invisible weapons stashed all over the shop in plain view ready to defend himself with. One is a sword of dancing and another is a sword +4, defender. The shop has at least three staff on duty at all times—one of whom is an out-of-uniform city guard officer, who notes the names and descriptions of those who buy particular weapons.

Proprietor: Zygarth "Slayer" Saern runs Saern's Fine Swords. He is a tall, gaunt, smiling man who can tell the age, quality, and condition of steel at a glance.

#### Tavenns

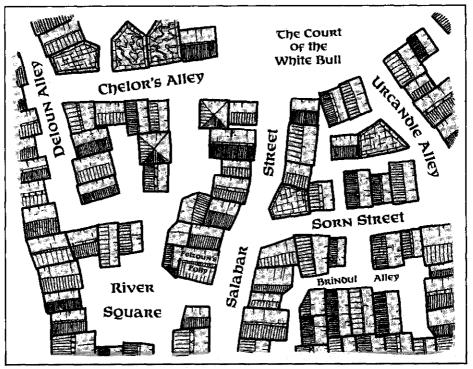
Felzoun's Folly

!!! 000

This many-windowed tavern is a noisy crowded, casual place, where many merchants and shoppers grab a quick tankard and a bite. Its exterior presents an awning-festooned, three-story face on the northwestern corner where the mouth of River Square opens into Salabar Street.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Location #175 on the color map. <sup>32</sup>Location #193 on the color map.





A bite here means a sausage roll or chicken-and-cheese pasty augmented by fresh asparagus with melted butter (when in season) or fresh whole oysters. Those with strong stomachs eat oysters raw here by tradition. The standard fare costs 4 sp each—a real bargain. The seasonal delicacies are 6 sp/plate.

There's little variety in drink here. Ale is 1 sp/tankard, stout is 2 sp, and wine and zzar are both 4 sp/tallglass. There are usually six white wines to be had, including sweet Neverwinter Nectar, and three reds.

I've heard rumors that stolen

goods can be fenced here, but could learn nothing more.<sup>33</sup> In all the din and confusion, I suspect wholesale *wars* could be fought here, with no one the wiser!

*Proprietor:* Felzoun Thar, the bristle-bearded, fearless dwarven host, is always bustling busily about the Folly.

#### lnns

The Gentle Rest

SSSS BBBB

As a rule, a traveler spends more than one might expect to be at the center of it all in Waterdeep

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Elminster reminds us to consult page 32 of *Waterdeep and the North* for more on this matter.



when taking accommodation in Trades Ward. This inn is by no means an exception to that practical expectation.

Located on the north side of the High Road, just west of where it begins to bend westwards to meet Waterdeep Way, this inn rises five full floors above the street. It is large and well-appointed.<sup>54</sup> And for the money being asked, it should be—the rate is 6 gp/room per night!

No meals are included, but there's house wine and hot water for baths. A copper sitting-tub is provided in each room, as well as a-noisy!-stoppered floor drain. Well-tended tabling is also part of

the room fee.

Proprietor: Torst Urlivan, the proprietor, is a tall, withdrawn, dignified man who dresses as if he were the wealthiest noble, but smells strongly of horse.

#### Gondalim's

BBBBB

This large, comfortable old inn stands in the angle where Winter Path and Burnt Wagon Way both meet with the High Road. Tt's a worn but comfortable place, and because of its massive construction, it's also very quiet. You'll seldom hear noises from other guests at night.

Rooms vary from 2-7 gp/night,

depending on the size and amenities. The top-priced rooms are actually large suites, sleeping up to 10 people in comfort. In all cases, stabling and dawnfry—or morningfeast, as they call it more tormally here—are included. In all, it is a nice place to stay and very central.

When crossing the lobby between the room stairs and the dining room, observant visitors may see a dark stain on the door leading to the kitchens—as if something spattered against it just above halfway up and ran down it to the floor. The stain isn't poor housekeeping. Some 70 winters ago, the princess Shaerglynda of Tethyr was murdered on that spot.

She died from a swordthrust that pinned her to the door—and the dark stain was left by her

life's blood. It can't be cleaned away and it never fades or disappears. Even when the door is replaced—and it has been, at least

twice—the bloodstain slowly

reappears by itself.

Proprietress: Shulmeira Gondalim is the proprietress. She is the granddaughter of the founder. She is a short, slim, unspectacular but charming woman of young age. She presides with quiet expertise over a staff of old, large, stoop-shouldered and shuffling, but calmly capable, servant women.

Location #191 on the color map.

<sup>35</sup> Location #173 on the color map. Elminster confirms that the bloodstain tale is true.



The Grey Serpent

SSSS BRARR

This sleek, fairly new expensive and high-class establishment stands on the east side of the Way of the Dragon, not far north from its intersection with Drakiir Street. Rooms here are a stiff 6 gp per night (single or double), but the furnishings are so clean and luxurious that this place outshines some noble villas I've seen! Stabling and very fine house wine, but no food, is included in the room fee.

By special arrangement, apprentices of the Launderers' Guild and the Order of Master Taylors are always on hand to whisk garments away for cleaning, alterations, or repairs. This is a cool, private place—but truly the lap of luxury.

Proprietor: Orlpiir Hammerstar runs the Grey Serpent. He's a man with dwarven blood in his past, I was told. However, when I met him, he appeared very tall, thin, and austere, with a cultured voice and a beaky nose. The dwarven blood must be rather far back in his ancestry.

The Unicorn's Horn

iiii bbbb

This fairly new inn occupies the most strategic location in Water-

deep: the northeast corner where the High Road meets Waterdeep Way and turns north.<sup>37</sup> As you might expect, room fees are as high as a halfling after several kegs: 10 gp to 25 gp per night! There's even an Imperial Suite of rooms on the top floor (the sixth) that costs 40 gp per night. Its windows command magnificent views of the city on three sides.

The furnishings are opulent, but not very tasteful. Huge tapestries and heavily gilded, massive pieces of furniture are everywhere. The canopied beds are the only comfortable place to sit in the entire inn.

Servants carry your bags, stable your mounts for you, bring a light evening meal with wine to your room, and hot spiced wine and hot water for a bath in the morning—but that's the extent of the service. There's a locked, guarded warehouse for wagons, carts, and coaches available as part of the room fee.

All in all, it is impressive, but not relaxing, or worth the money. Stay somewhere cheaper, and go to a nobles' feast if you want to be overwhelmed with haughty luxury instead.

Proprietor: Quendever Ilistrym owns and runs this inn. He is a haughty effete man of excellent cheekbones and breeding, but little energy or competence that I could see.

 $<sup>^{36}</sup>$  Location #204 on the color map.  $^{37}$  Location #178 on the color map.



### Alleys

Trades Ward's alleys are crowded, of ten highly scented passages usually crammed with garbage, delivered and stored goods, or just empty crates. They are always busy and may not offer much faster travel than the larger streets they wind among. Many a brawler has found that close quarters here prevent the use of a favorite but large weapon or can cause an inglorious collapse of boxes on top of himself!

#### Atkiss Alley

B

This short passage links Quaff Alley with Virgin's Square. Many men habitually slip through here in livery or finery. Cutpurses sometimes lurk here to prey on them, but city watch patrols are quite frequent.

#### Blackhorn Alley



The northernmost of the passages cutting through the city blocks that stand between the High Road and the Way of the Dragon, this alleyway is named for a long-dead cobbler of some note, Alsible Blackhorn, who lived on it. Today it is a constant haunt of brown rats big enough to make a (disgusting) meal of—and some poor folk do just that, hunting them with clubs and hurled, empty crates.

#### Brindul Alley



This crescent-shaped alley lies between Sorn Street and River Street. It is the frequent haunt of a dangerous apparition—one more often encountered near the docks in older days, but seen here since a few winters ago: the Hand That Sings.

The Hand has been seen more than once in Brindul Alley or floating in the ways nearby. It is an animated human hand with a mouth in its palm. The strange apparition all too similar to the sign of cursed Moander, the ancient and evil god who never sleeps quite soundly enough.





The Hand is said to snatch valuables it fancies—especially magic—when it encounters them, and to occasionally attack folk in the darkness, strangling them or tripping them into fatal falls. Most often, though, it seems to take no notice of those who do not bother or follow it, merely drifting along, eerily singing old and fragmentary Sword Coast ballads and love songs as it wanders through the night. 38

#### Chelor's Alley

This short passage runs due west from the Court of the White Bull. Lit each night by many lamps set in the windows of the upstairs home of the man it is named for (a merchant who just loves candles), it is used as a rendezvous by those who need light enough to read by (to check maps or contracts, for instance), and by city watch and city guard patrols who need to examine evidence.

## Dark Alley

This narrow winding passage runs east off Buckle Street, just south of, and parallel to, River Street. Overshadowed by tall buildings on all sides, it is gloomy even at highsun and is pitch dark by night—a favorite mugging spot, used by half a dozen or more local thugs at once. Not a place to go near after dusk.

#### Deloun Alley

Reached from Chelor's Alley, this back-of-the-shops delivery route is always crowded with crates, barrels, and the like. By night, rats of both the human and rodent sort lurk here, where crates can easily be toppled onto, or to block the escape of, surprised victims.

#### Hunters' Alley

J

This narrow passage runs east from the Way of the Dragon. It continues the route of Soothsayers' Way. It is named for two brave brothers who roamed the Realms when yet young. One became a lore lord of the Realms, and the other currently aspires to dukedom. As in their company, those who traverse this way generally have a wild but ultimately safe journey.

#### Lathin's Cut

B

This short passage links the Plinth and Jelabril Street to the High

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Statistics of the Hand that Sings are left to the DM. It is suggested that the Hand be based on the undead crawling claw (see the monster of that name in Volume 3 of the *Monstrous Compendium*). It will wield any magic items it can hold, and has a whimsical personality—quick to anger and attack, but not vindictive. It does not hold grudges.



Road. It is named for the man who leveled his own house to create it for the greater convenience of the devout. Both citizens and visitors used it as a landmark shortcut, and rendezvous.

#### Mhaer's Alley

This short passage has grown into a proper street that links Wall Way along the southern edge of the City of the Dead with Spendthrift Alley. It has the greatest concentration of shops in the city where you can buy thread, cord, rope, wire, and trimmings for clothing.

#### Spendthrift Alley

This former alley long ago grew into a major local street, but retained the feature that created its name: the ongoing bazaar of stalls and street vendors, selling everything cheap. This shoppers' gift from the gods never closes. By night, this route is brilliantly lit, and the trading goes on. The place to go for small trifles, buttons, laces, and whatever you can't find elsewhere. It is apt to be crowded. Beware thieves.

Quaff Alley

Stretching west from Atkiss Alley to the rear of the Golden Horn

gambling house, this short passage is named for its traditional use by drunkards, who drink here until they pass out, and snore the night away. In winter, the city watch spreads straw here for burrowing-bedding, to keep these unfortunates from freezing to death. Many a thief or adventurer has hidden among it temporarily.

#### Quill Alley

B

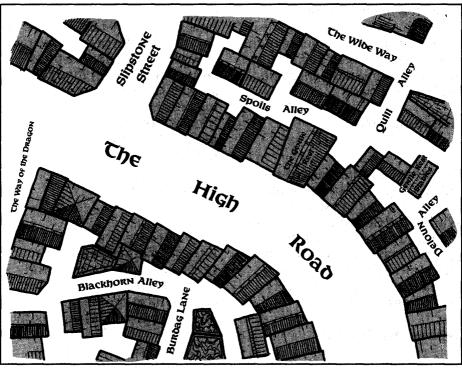
Now a proper street, this passage is the traditional neighborhood of scribes, cartographers, and clerks. It is named for the feathers that most people of letters use as pens. You can still hire many here.

The visitor will see many exterior staircases winding up and down the sides of the rickety old buildings along this lane. Children love to play among them, and so, by night, do thieves.

#### Spoils Alley

A behind-the-shops way running westerly from the southernmost end of Quill Alley, this innocent-looking passage is where the Thieves' Guild of old used to divide up the street takings of a nights work. Now it's a box-littered backwater—but it still used for shady meetings. It's an especially good place to change clothing or don a disguise.





#### Theln Lane



This short cut-through links Irimar's Walk with Andamaar's Street at the north end of Trades Ward. It's an echoing, bare passage overhung by balconies where hard currency girls dwell, lowering rope ladders to clients. Theln was a "businessman" who lived and died long ago in one of the buildings on this alleyway.

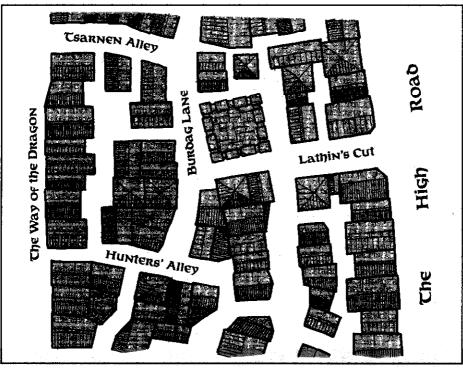
#### Tsarnen Alley



Running east off the Way of the Dragon to Burdag Lane just

north of the Plinth, this passage and Lathin's Cut provide a shortcut through the blocks of buildings. Thieves often preyed upon the traffic here in older days but Tsarnen the ranger made it his business to bodily dispose of them in a quite unpleasant manner one summer before the Thieves' Guild was overthrown. (Tsarnen had had a very bad expience with muggers early in life.) The thieves moved to safer hunting grounds after a short time. These days, with Tsarnen long in his grave, the passage is not quite as safe, but watch patrols and, by day pilgrims and priests pass along it often.





## Tuckpurse Alley

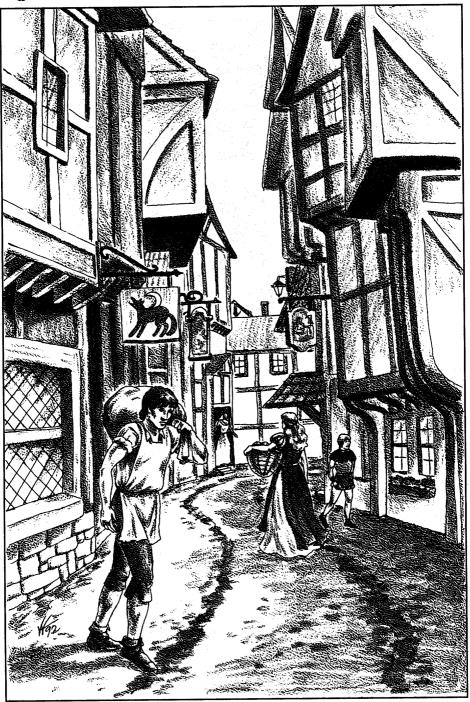
This alleyway runs east and south from the eastern end of Spendthrift Alley, linking it to the easternmost end of Vellarr's Lane. By night, it's very dark and a favorite working ground for thugs, some of whom use children to trip or snatch at passersby. There's a very large rain barrel partway along this alley iust behind Thond Glass & Glazing that you should beware of. Its gutter was diverted long ago, and it is used by thugs who crouch inside it, watching for prey through knotholes.

### Urcandle Alley

) This

This short passage links the Court of the White Bull with Sorn Street. Urcandle was a person (just who has been forgotten), but today this alleyway is where you'll find ropes, cables, harness, reins, drovers' whips, spare wagon wheels, and the like for sale. If your cart or wagon needs a spare, part, this is the place to look, There are other places in the city that sell such items (notably in South Ward), but the shops along this route have the greatest concentration of such vendors in one area.





# Southern Ward



any of the common folk of Waterdeep dwell in Southern Ward. This homely, friendly, busy and

largely poor area is the forgotten ward of Waterdeep. It is sometimes referred to as Caravan City after its major activity. In it warehouses, stables, and coach sheds stand in plenty to serve the bustle of overland trade in and out of Waterdeep. Be warned: Native Waterdhavians call it just South Ward. Anyone using the longer term is marked instantly as an outsider.

There's little of interest for the casual stroller to see, and the security of trade goods dictates both the presence of guards and their reluctance to let visitors gawk at what's inside warehouses or wagons. Still, South Ward does have landmarks, and some hidden pleasures, too.

### Landmarks

This is the first part of the city seen by most travelers entering it overland from the south. One of the city's smallest wards and probably its least socially and politically important and influential one, South Ward is the ordinary side of Waterdeep.

From Southgate onwards, the broad street known as the Way of the Dragon forms the southern and western boundaries of South Ward. The High Road, the closest thing Waterdeep has to a main street, bisects it.

South Ward's eastern boundary is the Trollwall. Its ragged northern boundary consists of Telshambra's Street, a little bit of the High Road, Sahtyra's Lane, Caravan Court (all of which is deemed to be in South Ward), and Belzer's Walk. Some call Belzer's Walk simply Belzer's, but locals sharply correct those who do.

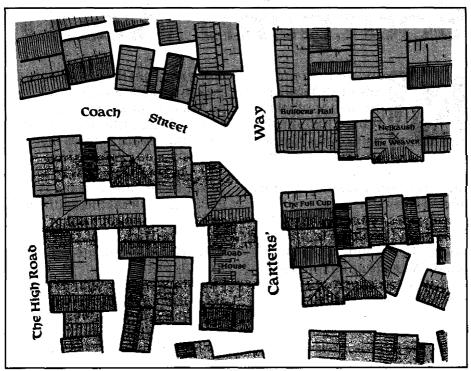
South Ward is dominated by large, tall, old stone, mud brick, and timber warehouses. Crowded among them are three- and four-floor-high tenements, most with shops at street level. Trees and even bushes are few, dust (or mud) is plentiful, but everything

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The private guards at every establishment (typically a dozen or so LN F1s and F2s) can call on the law, who will come running at any sound of shouting or clanging metal, such as a guard beating his blade on his shield. All the guards know this.

City watch patrols are detailed on page 17 of FR1 Waterdeep and the North. They pass a given point about every 20 minutes and look into a tavern or inn dining room about every 40 minutes.

As detailed on pages 20 and 23 of the *City System* boxed set booklet, the city guard also patrols South Ward in six-man detachments. Typical patrol details are as given on page 23. Reinforcements will be a dozen LG hm F3s to F6s clad in chain mail and armed with maces, long swords, daggers, slings, and a pole arm appropriate to the locale. Guard patrols pass a given street location about every hour in South Ward, and arrive 2d8 minutes after a city watch patrol blows a warning horn.





else is kept clean, and the streets are always busy. The predominant sound in South Ward is the rumble of cart wheels. The smell of this part of the city is not of fish from the harbor, but is provided by the dung of the draft animals. Most of the stables are merely covered pens, although sometimes a multifloored building provides the cover.

The best-known places in the Ward are Caravan Court; Brian the Swordmaster's smithy and shop;<sup>2</sup> the house of the kindly

wizard Kappiyan Flurmastyr;<sup>3</sup> Metalmasters' Hall,<sup>4</sup> headquarters of the Most Careful Order of Skilled Smiths & Metalforgers; the House of Good Spirits,<sup>5</sup> headquarters of the Vintners', Distillers', and Brewers' Guild; the magnificent, gargoyle-adorned edifice of the Stone House<sup>6</sup> of the Carpenters', Roofers', and Plaisterers' Guild (or, as I heard one merchant call it, "that great pile"); and the Jade Dancer tavern and festhall. The House of Good Spirits is also a working inn, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> On the color city map, Brian's smithy/shop is #207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Location #218 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Location #225 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Location #214 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Location #206 on the color map. Its floor plan appears on Map 7 of the City System boxed set.





it can be found from afar by following the strong almond scent of the zzar made there. Locals also use the lesser known taverns as landmarks, along with the other guildhalls in the ward: the Coach & Wagon Hall, head-quarters of the Wagonmakers' and Coach Builders' Guild; Saddlers' and Harness-Makers' Hall of the guild of the same name; Builders' Hall of the Guild of Stonecutters and Masons; and the Road House, headquarters of the Fellowship

of Carters and Coachmen.

I found that the most interesting places in South Ward were hidden away or that most visitors and Waterdhavians alike pass them by. One was the Moon Sphere, a magical sphere of blue radiance that appears in Dancing Court only when the moon is full and allows any folk inside of it to fly or dance on air. Another was the Old Monster Shop, which fronts on the Jar, and sells monsters for the hungry the bored, and the vengeful.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Location #208 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Location #216 on the color map. <sup>9</sup>Location #217 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Location #219 on the color map. <sup>11</sup> Location #222 on the color map.

The guilds and their doings, fees, and current leaders are described in the Waterdeep and the North sourcebook.



## Kappiyan FlurmasTyr's House

The unassuming house of the wizard Kappiyan Flurmastyr is a popular destination in South Ward. Many folk wanting potions find their ways to Kappiyan's house. The house sits at the northern entrance to Anchoret's Court and has easy access to the safe drinking water well there.

An arched wooden door with a brass strike-gong and a brass nameplate that says "Kappiyan" leads into a small, neat, richly appointed two-story building. Fine furniture, rugs, and vivid, skillfully painted landscapes crowd a cozy home. Save for the homonculous that answers the door and the stone golem hung with cloaks and hats in the entry hall, the ground floor looks like the abode of any well-off, unpretentious merchant or widow.

On the upper floor, however, you'll find a large spellcasting

chamber at the head of the stairs, three bedrooms (one for Kappiyan, one for an apprentice, and one for guests), a wardrobe room, a bathroom, and a spellbooklined study lit by a tall brass brazier with a cast snake coiling up its standard. The rooms are richly paneled in polished wood, and all of the large, oval beds levitate, floating silently at whatever height anyone touching them wills them to be at.

Kappiyan's current apprentice told me there are guardian creatures and magic—especially flying wands that Kappiyan can trigger from afar—all over the house, but the only wand I saw was hidden behind a secret panel in the wall of the wardrobe. If you rap three times <sup>13</sup> on a certain panel there, it drops open to reveal a cached, silvery wand <sup>14</sup> for use in emergencies. These are fortunately few. Those living near told me Kappiyan is a quiet, kindly neighbor.

An expert maker of potion<sup>15</sup> who testily insists he is not

<sup>13</sup> In the same round.

<sup>15</sup> Kappiyan's prices tend to be twice the XP value of a potion in gold pieces. Exceptions are the magical drafts that ensure longevity (which he can't make, and has no supply of), allow etherealness and aid in treasure finding (three times their XP value), any potions of control (eight times their XP value), and

healing or curative potions of any sort (which he gives out for half their XP value).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> This place is #218 on the color city map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Information given in the *Knight of the Living Dead* gamebook, which contains descriptions of Kappiyan, his abode, and his apprentice Shalara, suggests this is a *wand of teleportation*. Thrice per day, and at a charge cost of 1 per being per use, the wand can unerringly *teleport* the wielder and/or any beings touched by the wand or the wielder to any location on the same plane. Unwilling beings cannot avoid this effect, but the wielder must make a successful attack roll to touch them. Multiple beings and nonliving material carried, touched, or within 10' of the wielder and not in the direct possession of another creature that are willed to accompany the 'ported beings are all brought along. The trip can deliberately be to a midair location, and the wand then confers a *feather full* effect on all the things it moves-so the user could 'port to a hostile location, appear above defenders, and cast spells or trigger other items while descending.



running a potion shop, Kappiyan is too kind-hearted to turn the world away and so is always selling potions to folk who turn up at his door. The proceeds fund his researches. Kappiyan is a refiner of small and elegant magics, not a wizard bent on ruling the world. He is kind and easily moved, and is always helping hard-luck cases. Those who are cruel or who use magic to govern others make him very angry. He has been known to appear without warning and use his own magic to deliver sharp lessons to such folk.

Kappiyan's kindness and soft heart have led him to help many eager students of the Art. Over the years, he has aided a long succession of maidens in becoming sorceresses. His current apprentice is Shalara, a friendly lass born to merchants in Amphail.

Kappiyan looks like most folk



think a good wizard should. He's tall, thin, white-bearded, and always clad in dark robes covered with runes and symbols.

<sup>16</sup>Kappiyan is further detailed on page 53 of FR1 *Waterdeep and* the *North*. His staff is a *staff of power*. He is 86% likely to correctly identify any standard (that is, ones that are found in the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide*) potion that hasn't been doctored or mixed with something else. He can always tell when two or more potions have been mixed together, but not necessarily what the potions were.

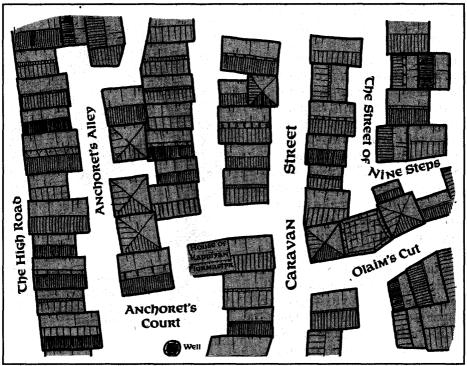
Most of Kappiyan's enchanted gems have effects identical to rings of protection and potions of vitality. One commonly crafted sort requires a ruby, emerald, or black opal. It heals 4-16 points of damage/day, operating by itself with a visible flash and glow when its bearer is injured. Roll 4d4 when it first activates. If the total is higher than the hit points lost, the remainder waits for another activation, later in the day but is lost if it doesn't occur within 24 hours or 144 turns.

Kappiyan also makes periapts of health, periapts of proof against poison, and greenstone amulets (detailed in FR4 The Magister and many other Realms sources).

<sup>17</sup>Even Elminster was envious of the roster of apprentices Kappiyan had accumulated over the years. He's so kindly that young lasses trust him completely (and rightly). He has aided the following sorceresses of note, among many others, to become accomplished wielders of the Art:

- •Cathliira of Elturel (CN hf W9)
- •Ilphara of Amnwater (NG hf W10)
- Imbaerl of Baldur's Gate (CG hf W12)
- ·Larithmae of Almraiven (CG hf W12)
- •Minthalue of Suzail (CN hf W9). When she came to Kappiyan, she was a famous Calishite exotic dancer. Tongues wagged furiously all over Waterdeep for over a year.
  - •Nesmorae of Callidyrr (CG hf W11)
  - •Phantrara of Priapurl (NG hf W8)





He's going bald, looks very distinguished, and always carries a staff. He can identify many potions by look and smell alone, and is especially skilled at turning gems into magical items that protect or aid their bearers.

Kappiyan lives with Shalara, who is perhaps 16 years old. She has dark hair and eyes, and is earnest and easily upset. She prefers to and wears pants and tunics, as do boys her age, for greater freedom of motion.

Spell battles in and around Kappiyan's house may be disappointingly few (to tourists, not neighbors), but this was not always so. Eighty years ago, one of Waterdeep's first nightclubs stood on this site. It was known as the Rusty Halidom and was destroyed one night in a magic fight between drunken wizards, who blew it apart with all the guests, wine kegs, and dancers still inside. There are still rumors of buried treasure being lost in the wreckage and paved over now in the alleyway outside the house. Shalara doubts such tales.

It is in the streets around Kappiyan's house that the Ghost Knight is most often seen?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> This phantom, and the adventure connected with him, appears in the Undermountain Adventures booklet of *The Ruins of Undermountain* set.







## The Moon Sphere



This strange, beautiful feature of South Ward appears only on nights when the moon is full. The Moon Sphere is a magical globe of blue radiance that appears in Dancing Court as the result of an ancient, powerful enchantment.<sup>19</sup>

The courtyard was left clear because of it, and the adjacent Jade Dancer was built to take advantage of it. For generations folk have come to Waterdeep to see it, and Waterdhavians have used it to relax and in courting each other.

#### The Place

Dancing Court is a smooth-finished courtyard paved in flagstones. Its central space is perhaps 60 feet across. In the midst of this a 40-foot-diameter sphere of translucent, vivid blue radiance fades into being as the rays of the full moon fall on the Court and fades away with waning moonlight.

By Waterdhavian law no one is allowed to restrict access of anyone else to the sphere or charge any fee for admittance to its confines. And no one is allowed to cast any spell or unleash any magic within, or into, the Dancing Court for fear of disrupting the magic. By tradition, a city guard patrol, accompanied by a member of the Watchful Order (always a wizard of some power) keeps watch over the Dancing Court when the Sphere is present.

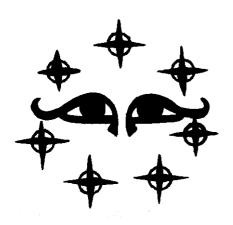
### The Prospect

The Moon Sphere has existed for at least a century due to a powerful magic created by the goddess Selune. There have always been rumors that she, various avatars of her, or her agents reside in Waterdeep, concealing themselves among the common folk.

The ideal place of worship to Selune is open to the sky – on a bare hilltop or clearing in a forest. In a city, a rooftop or open space is preferable to an enclosed chancel. Because of this, many services at the House of the Moon take place on its roof, visible to all nearby. The Moon Sphere is said to be the sailors' temple, open to all. Whenever it appears, any sailors in the city sober enough to make the journey travel to it to extend a hand into the blue glow and whisper a prayer to the Lady to see them safe to their next port. The danger rating for the Sphere is for who you might meet with, around, or near it, not for the Sphere itself.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> The Moon Sphere is in the Dancing Court, the open space just west of the Jade Dancer (#208) on the color map.





What makes the Sphere attractive to those who do not worship Selune is its major magical property: Living beings who enter it and will themselves to rise can fly about inside the sphere's radiant confines. Traditionally, courting couples

come here to dance in the air and kiss on high, floating so only their lips touch. There are tales of even more ardent activities between intimate companions within the Sphere's radius.

Guests in the Jade Dancer customarily extend their festivities into the Court on nights of the full moon and drift or fly while drinking. The more daring even leap from the balcony of the Jade Dancer into the Moon Sphere. It is a mark of social daring and debonair nonchalance to do this without spilling even a drop of one's drink.

#### Travelers' Lore

There are many tales of dancers finding their true love in the sphere—even Piergeiron, High Lord of Waterdeep, is said to have first met his bride, Maethiira

Elminster: Let's keep things that way.

Elminster's assistance has given us these details:

Any sentient being can fly at will, with Maneuverability Class A and a movement rate of 7. Up to the flying being's own weight in worn or carried material can be supported. One person cannot drag another down by grasping them and willing descent. The Sphere's magic parts the two, so only one falls.

Descent within the Sphere is governed by conditions equal to a *feather fall* spell.

Beings who pass entirely out of the Sphere by means of their own navigation or who are forced out (and objects fired, hurled, or dropped out) fall to the ground below with normal speed and damaging effects. If they fall back into contact with the Sphere, its magic reasserts itself over their fall. The Sphere extends 30 feet above the Court at its highest point.

The Moon Sphere also affects magic cast within it. Spells of the abjuration, enchantment/charm, and greater divination schools when cast by a wizard of chaotic good alignment only and, when cast by a priest of Selune only, the spheres all, charm, creation, divination, guardian, healing, necromantic, protection and wards will have the fullest possible effects (maximum duration, etc.) when cast or triggered in the Sphere. The Sphere does the same thing to magic connected with starlight and moonglow (the powers of a *ring of shooting stars*, for example). Fire-based spells, however, are always reduced to the minimum possible damage (1 point per die) and effects.

Certain magics are twisted by the Sphere into wild magic results—hence the prohibition against magic. Adventurers are warned to curb any reckless behavior or tendencies while in Dancing Court or the Moon Sphere.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Volo: There are other powers. Even high-ranking priestesses of Selune don't know them all. Devout worshippers of Selune can be healed of wounds, poisoning, insanity, diseases, and magical curses by contact with the Sphere, but just how, when, and what rituals are involved remain unknown to me. The city guard patrols strongly discourage any experimentation intended to learn the secrets of the Sphere.







here.<sup>22</sup> Selune herself is said to sometimes appear conferring powers, punishments, and *geaslike* directives upon folk. Her priestesses try to send at least one of their number to dance and pray in the Moon Sphere each time it appears.

There is also a ghostly tale about the phantoms of seven murdered princesses sometimes seen dancing in the Sphere. These young ladies, all of the royal house of Tethyr, were slain in Waterdeep some 80 winters back by a cruel host: their uncle, who wanted the throne.

After a night of joyful dancing with handsome young men in the Moon Sphere, which they found wondrous, the princesses were very tired. Their uncle replaced the pillows in their beds with mimic grubs (flatworm-like relatives of mimics who dissolve flesh by touch). The unfortunate girls were found dead in the morn, intact except for their heads, which had been eaten away to clean, bare skulls.

Many bravos and young blades of Waterdeep have spoken, down the many nights since, of dancing with pretty maidens in rich gowns. They are silent, but seem somehow sad, their eyes bright with unshed tears—and their faces, when approached closely (for a kiss, perhaps), are instantly transformed into grinning skulls!

Certain powerful wizards of Waterdeep are also said to come here on rare occasions, when deep in thought, and drift about, staring at the stars as they ponder. It's the closest some folk of Waterdeep ever get to the great Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, and, for that matter, his more sinister rival, Maaril, and the aged head of the noble house of Wands, Maskar.

There is also a rumor among wizards that the touch of the Moon Sphere can recharge certain items, if the right words are spoken.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Maethiira has been dead for almost 14 years. Piergeiron has not remarried and dotes on their daughter, Aleena, who is tall, grave, beautiful, reclusive, and said to dabble in magic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>This rumor is true. Elminster refused to reveal the ritual, but did say that *wands of magic missiles* are among the items aided by the Sphere.



## The Old Monster Shop

This little-known shop fronts on the Jar, a close that opens off Tilman's Lane not far from the Trollwall. There a stone warehouse sports a door marked with: "Beware Guardian Monsters Within." It is flanked by a pair of tall, massive, arched cart doors.

Inside, a nondescript-looking man named Feldyn Goadolfyn sells monsters to the hungry, the bored, and the vengeful.

#### The Place

This ugly poorly built warehouse is littered with dust and rubble. It smells of animal dung and damp.

The upper floors are largely empty,<sup>24</sup> but visitors entering by the door are immediately confronted by a hungrily interested gargoyle perched on the swinging gate of a service counter.

Behind the counter sits Feldyn, who's usually examining a map or a worn copy of a crude monthly illustrated chapbook. He always appears calm, even bored. An adventurer who once saw him threatened with a cockatrice said he didn't even blink, but

merely yawned and told the cockatrice-holder to state his business.

## The Prospect

Shops where one can buy live monsters are rare anywhere in Faerun.<sup>25</sup> A surprisingly large number of folk make their ways as unobtrusively as possible to Feldyn's doors. His clientele include jaded nobles looking for exotic things to hunt, eat, or play with; those who want to create a sensation at parties or with traveling shows, or just acquire a wall trophy they can boast about; adventurers in need of practice; breeders and wizards needing live material for their researches, and so on.

In pools, cages, and a variety of imprisoning containers in his cellars, Feldyn keeps an everchanging roster of monsters to sell to them. He also has a room of jugged, jarred, or coffered remnants, from horns and bottled gore to pelts and scales.

These valuables are guarded by a loyal (trained or magically controlled) staff of guardian 26 monsters: four watchspiders, two gargoyles (Feldyn controls them with a ring of gargoyles<sup>21</sup>), two mimics (a killer mimic that poses as a bar on the inside of the

And in at least a dozen other worlds, Elminster added dryly.

See "Spider, Subterranean" on pages 123-124 in FOR2 The Drow of the Underdark.

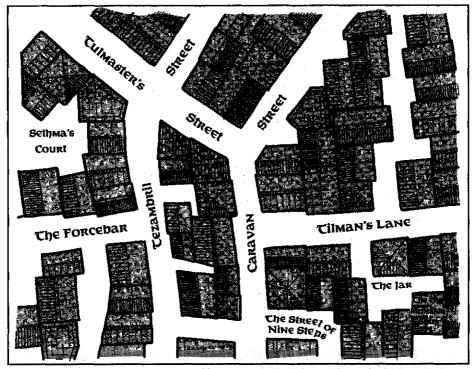
The Lambaign Guide of The Ruins of Undermountain set.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Feldyn makes a few coppers each month from selling guarded safe storage space to citizens, merchants, and fences of Waterdeep who deliver crated goods to him. He uses the three rambling, rundown upper floors of the warehouse to house these crates, and won't accept uncrated things.









cart doors, and a space mimic<sup>28</sup> that pretends to be the door at the bottom of the cellar stairs most of the time), and a female-looking stone golem known as Ouldra. In case of attack, Feldyn will flee to the cellars,<sup>20</sup> trusting to his *ring of spell turning* to keep him safe as his monsters spring to the attack.

## The People

The owner of the Old Monster Shop, Feldyn, is evil, coldly calm, and unscrupulous. He gets even, but he does not hate. He uses his unremarkable appearance to adopt whatever disguises he deems necessary when following foes through Waterdeep. Whenever outside his shop, Feldyn is armed with a pair of golden lion figurines of wondrous power.

Feldyn will purchase monsters, including eggs and young. He does not like to handle magically transformed or petrified monsters (to minimize his personal danger). Badly wounded or dead beasts fetch very little from him.

He sometimes hires adventurers who have brought him lots of monsters to get specific monsters to order or to slay or kidnap folk

<sup>28</sup>In MC7 the Monstrous Compendium SPELLJAMMER® Appendix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>If necessary, he'll duck through one of his gates, taking his best chest of accumulated treasure.



who have become his foes. Among residents of Waterdeep, his recent contacts have included the Company of the Bloody Banner, a fellowship of a dozen evil female half-elves, and the Weird Company; an evil adventuring band dominated by six wizards.

#### The Prices

Feldyn buys cheap and sells expensive. Most beasts go for at least 1000 gp. Prices increase with a creature's danger and rarity.<sup>30</sup> Monster parts are much cheaper—usually 40 gp to 250 gp, depending on what they are.

Whenever authorities look into his shop, Feldyn claims to be in business largely to serve the kitchens of Waterdeep, with a few noble patrons who love hunting as special patrons. He shows his selection of monster parts, keeps his guardian monsters (except for the golem) out of view and gives out free copies of two of his most famous recipes: dragon soup and roasted cockatrice. Not being a member of the city guard, I had to pay 1 sp per recipe – but I've since been able to try them both, and the results were delicious!

#### Travelers' Lore

Some who live near the Old Monster Shop claim they've seen folk go inside it and never come out again - and also seen folk (and worse!) come out that they swear never went in.

Members of the Watchful Order who have too much drink say more. Some claim Feldyn has some sort of monster in the depths of his cellars that gives birth to other creatures. Others claim that he has several gates that link him to faraway places in the Realms.

An Underdark cavern, near Menzoberranzan (a drow city detailed in the Menzoberranzan set)

·Somewhere in the jungles of Chult

• A glade deep in the High Forest (see FR5 The Savage Frontier)

• A knoll in the Sword Coast North, near Everlund (The Savage Frontier)

A valley in Amn in the hills north of Amnwater (see FR3 Empires of the Sands)

Somewhere on the third level of Undermountain, just outside Skullport.

Feldyn and his hired adventurers use these to gather monsters. They have caches of food and gear

hidden near most of their exit *gates*.

In his shop, Feldyn has over 56,000 gp, in bags of 100 gp each, stashed inside hollow pillars in the cellars. He also has a chest visible for the taking (containing 540 gold pieces and several false treasure maps) and his best chest. His best chest is a dark coffer high on a gloomy shelf above and inside a doorway on the cellar stairs that holds 12 rubies, 8 star sapphires, and 2 emeralds—each worth 5,000 gp—as well as 4 trade bars of silver, worth 25 gp each, and two potions of extra-healing in steel vials.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>As a rule of thumb, Feldyn's price in gold pieces will equal the listed XP value of a monster.
 <sup>31</sup> Both of these tales are true. Feldyn has a deepspawn hidden in his cellar (a monster detailed in FR11 Dwarves Deep) and a row of unmarked closet doors that are actually the entrances to a webwork of two-way gates connecting his shop with

A ravine in the Stonelands north of Cormyr near the Haunted Halls (detailed in FRQ1 The Haunted Halls of Eveningstar)

<sup>•</sup>The edge of Anauroch near Spellgard (see FR13 Anauroch)
•A clearing in the Wild Wood (Demall Forest) in Alaron in the Moonshae Isles (see FA1 Halls of the High King and FR2 Moonshae)

## Feldyn's Recipes

Elminster warns that dragon meat should be properly prepared before eating (see page 82 of FOR1 *Draconomicon*) and that cockatrices should not be touched for at least three hours after death—and even then, gloves should be used to pluck out the larger feathers and throw them away. The large feathers sometimes retain the power to petrify for days.

#### Dragon Soup



14 hot onions (or 6 shallots and 2 cloves of garlic)

1 pinch salt

1 handful dill

1 handful parsley

o large, ripe Tomatoes

I pinch black pepper
1 skin goat's milk
much clean water

dragon meat (ingredients listed do up to 10 pounds)

In a cauldron, bring water to a boil and with a ladle dip tomatoes in for the space of a short trail joke.

Take Them out and peel. Them with a sharp knife. Lay The skin aside. Stir The rest back into the water.

Chop The onions (and garlic, if used) finely. Stir This in Too, adding salt, dill, and pepper to the pot.

Remove any scaly, inedtible outer hide from the
dragon meat. Cut the meat
into manageable portions,
and drop it into the pot—
which must be at a rolling
boil. Let boil while an inch
is burned down on a
Thumb-Thick candle.

Then, stop feeding the fire. As the pot cools, stir in the goats milk and the parsley. Let stand until the fat and oil present in all dragon meat comes to the surface. Skim this off and then reheat the mixture for diving.

Uncooked dragon meat keeps six sunrises. Cooked meat keeps for Twice That.

He also tells me one pour is a measure achieved by tipping a shaken bottle upside down and then immediately upright again. A knife is an amount that stays on the blade of a knife. Merithian sauce is equivalent to a strongly spiced steak sauce. Nightcap mushrooms are found only in the Realms. Be very cautious with mushroom substitutions.

These recipes also show some time measures used by cooks in the Realms. The 16 verses of song called for (at least, as Elminster sang them) equal about 8 rounds, game time, and the space

of a good sword-sharpening seems to be about 6 turns.





- 1 cockatrice carcass
- 2 Leeks
- 2 handfuls of morels (or 1 handful nightcap mushrooms)
- 2 plants (whole stalks, with hearts) celery or marsh lettuce
- 1 handful bean Tubers (or marsh grass roots)
  - 1 pinch Thyme
  - 1 pinch salt
  - 2 pinches pepper
- 1 pouch flask's worth of red Lythton (or other semi-sweet) wine
- 2 pours hot brown Merithian sauce
  - 2 knives of animal fat

In a skillet or upended iron shield over a small fire, chop and mix leeks with salt, pepper, bean tubers. Sizzle in animal fat until leek pieces grow soft. While the

Leek cooks, push it around just enough to prevent burning.

Cut off the bony head and neck of the cockatrice, which can later be boiled for soup. SLit the carcass up the breast, turning out the gizzard (with its sometimes-poisonous contents) and other organs.

The cockatrice need not be skinned. Its leathery, scaly outer skin protects the tender flesh during cooking. Don't let blood and fluids drain away or the bird will cook too dry. Tough or dried carcasses should be doused in diluted wine (1 part to 2 parts water) before roasting.

Stuff The carcass with celeny and Thyme. Put in the skillet atop sizzling leeks, roast for 16 verses of "The Unicorn and the Maiden," and Turn.

When both sides are brown, Turn the carcass so it lies with the flattest side down, and douse it with the wine. When bubbling and sizzling dies, baste the carcass with the brown sauce. Roast for the space of a good sword-sharpening, basting often and turning when needed to keep the color even.

The skin will crack and dry like old parchment, lifting and flaking away like wood ash when the meal is done. Take from the fire and let cool until it can be held for eating. Goes well with ale and greens.



## The House of Good Spirits

Tavern, Inn, Winery & Headquarters of the Vintners', Distillers', and Brewers' Guild

mmmmm

Located on the northwest side of the Rising Ride (at the crest of the small knoll for which that street is named) between the mouths of Juth Alley and Robin's Way, this complex of buildings is fronted by a timber, wattle and daub tavern. It extends north and west along Tornsar Alley as far as Buckle Street, where an alleyway offers access to the inn and its stables at the back of the tavern.<sup>32</sup>

The House of Good Spirits has always been a guild headquarters and a winery where sluth" and zzar are made. (Zzar is made from sluth by fortifying it with almond liqueur.)

Some 60 winters ago, a small brewery was added on the corner of the Rising Ride and Tornsar Alley and then the tavern was opened. About four winters ago, the operators of the House expanded into an adjacent warehouse to open its doors as a 40-bed inn primarily for the convenience of visiting grapegrowers and wine merchants.

Owned by the guild, this

complex has enriched all guild members and now serves them as a home away from home base in which they can stay when their homes are overcrowded or being worked on, go for a quiet tankard when the working day is done, and house, entertain, and meet with business guests.

#### The Place

The entire complex still looks like a collection of warehouses and factories inside and out. Massive, exposed beams and bare mud brick walls are everywhere, and the lamp lighting is dim. Small passages, cozy nooks, odd doorways, and surprise steps up and down are numerous, and turnishings are bare-bones and workaday, but comfortable and ruggedly serviceable.

The inn, tavern, wine store, winery, and brewery are directly joined inside, but a narrow courtyard separates the stables from the rest.

## The Prospect

The House of Good Spirits boasts the best and cheapest selection of liqueurs and strong drink in the entire City of Splendors—even if, as a noble I overheard snootily put it, "You have to sit in the stinking brewery to drink its wares." Fiery blackthroat from

 $<sup>^{32}</sup>$  This is #214 on the color city map.  $^{33}$  Sluth is dry, sparkling white wine.  $^{34}$  The Harpers novel Elfshadow describes an arrival (pages 114-117) and stay at the House.



far Lantan is as plentiful in its spacious cellars as is ruby-red elverquisst, beloved of the elves.

It is a comfortable, if disorganized, inn, most of the rooms sporting two single beds and bare board floors. There are no luxuries, but tired travelers will find it a comfortable place to sleep. The low prices attract a regular clientele of hard drinkers, but the staff<sup>35</sup> keep order. Brawls are frequent, but take place on the street outside, not within. Breaking one of the long, leaded windows of the tavern – or forcing another patron to do so by hurling him through it costs a brawler 4 gp. During daylight hours, guild representatives are always on hand for those who want to deal in spirits. Private meeting rooms are available for conferences.

## The Provender

The inn provides only a basic menu: roast boar, rabbit-andsmalls stew (fowl, vegetables, squirrels, and the like, always simmering in the kitchen), and cheese-and-mustard saltbread melts (small, circular loaves of very tasty bread).

## The People

The guild staff numbers 40 or so, from Elguth the stableboy (an

expert guide to the gambling houses and festhalls of Waterdeep) to Simon Thrithyn the innkeeper. The resident chief guild buyer and seller is Dlarna Suone. Her second is Gordrym Zhavall. Dlarna is the only sharptempered and sharp-witted person in the place. The others tend to be stolid, calm folk—even the seven burly bouncers, who are led by Mrorn "Black Bracers" Halduth.

#### The Prices

A room costs 2 gp/bed per night. If one person wants a private room, he must pay for two beds, but can invite a nonstaying guest to eat the second food share. This rate includes stabling for all mounts and all meals desired just ask. Draft beasts are each 1 cp per night extra. The dining fare is restricted to the spare menu I listed. Also included is all the ale the guest wants to drink.

Wine and spirits are extra, and are sold by the bottle. Prices range from 2 cp/bottle for sluth made on the premises (a cut rate—outside the tavern, such a bottle sells for 8 cp) to 6 sp/bottle of house zzar. Prices then rise rapidly to a high of 33 gp/bottle for the finest, and with local unrest, very rare, Tethyrian distilled dragonsblood.

first arrival, then 1d4 F2s and an F3 1d3 rounds later.

36A few popular wines and their prices per bottle: Neverwinter black icewine, 7 sp; Best Old Mintarn whisky, 1 gp; Wyvern Whisky, 2 gp (made in Nimbral – a wyvern's scale floats in every bottle).

<sup>35</sup> Staff acting as bouncers typically arrive as follows: 1d4 F2s in 1d4 rounds, an F1 a round after the



#### Travelers' Lore

It is widely rumored that a large amount of treasure—a dragon hoard, brought back to Water-deep by an adventuring company sponsored by the guild long ago—is hidden somewhere in or under the House. Would-be prospectors are warned that the staff take a very dim view of people who dig or pry at walls, floors, and ceilings.

The adventuring band, the Guild Adventuring Company (colloquially known as the Flying Flagons) all perished at Yartar, defending it against raiding orcs. This is remembered in the "Fall of the Company" written by the Company's bard, Felestin, and

sent by spell to a comrade a day's hard ride distant as the adventurers fought their last fight.

These days, most guild members can recall only a snatch of the song. But visitors beware: If you laugh or offer disrespect when this stanza is sung, all the men singing with tears in their eyes are apt to rise up and separate you from your life.

And no one will stand there to hear our reply,
And no one will come there to see heroes die...
Oh, raise flagons high
And swords to the sky
For guild and adventure
Die well when you die!





## The Jade Dancer

Tavern & Festhall

## !!!! 0000

This raucous haunt of the young, free, and ardently romantic opens onto Dancing Court, sometime site of the eerily beautiful Moon Sphere, just north of Slop Street in the Tween Run (the local name for the alleys and buildings between the High Road and the Way of the Dragon).<sup>37</sup>

#### The Place

Built of timber and stone columns, its outer walls sealed by a slather-coat of plaster into which mud bricks have been pressed in slanting courses, the Dancer looks like what it is: a warehouse with a grand front tacked on. Its upper floors open onto a broad, two-tier balcony overlooking the Dancing Court, which boasts intricate ornamental wrought iron railings and potted truit trees. Inside, minstrels play on a hanging gallery suspended from the ceiling on chains above a raised central stage where dancers and singers perform.

The stage and gallery dominate an open central well that soars up to a roof skylight. Interior balconies or promenades of the upper floors open onto the

well and look down on the stage. Three large, wide-curving circular staircases rise around the well to link the floors. They provide good views of shows, and are often lined with standing patrons.

The kitchens, pantries, and staff quarters are hidden below ground level. The main floor is entirely given over to a bar, a ring-shaped dance area around the stage, and sturdily built, round wooden tables linked by floor-chains to quartets of plain, heavy-duty chairs for patrons.

The upper floors are devoted to large, plant-adorned drinking parlors on the Dancing Court side and festhall rooms (opening off the promenade) around the rest of their extent.

## The Prospect

This clean, brightly lit, noisy place is beloved of young Waterdhavians wanting to be in the rush of new fashion and "in" behavior—and to be seen to be part of it. As most nights pass, the visitor can see and smell the steadily rising excitement. If half the too-loud, excited young boys swaggering around knew how to use the huge weapons they wave about, the nightly slaughter would make Dancing Court run red with gore.<sup>38</sup>

The Jade Dancer is #208 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>The chairs have been thoughtfully chained to the tables. Only an incredibly strong man (ST 18 or greater) can lift and hurl a table and four chairs as one—though many patrons swear they've seen it done.





The Dancer has a staff of expert, good-looking escorts who mingle with the patrons. Misguessing who is a patron and who is an escort has left many a visitor to the city with a face red and ringing from a hard slap. A hint: You can recognize an escort by the room keys worn around their necks on fine chains.

The rooms are not all for the use of escorts. Couples who find each other among the drinks can rent rooms. Those thinking of

taking liberties with escorts or guests are hereby warned that the Jade Dancer also has as a bouncer a watchful wizard, Selcharoon Nrim, who wears a ring of invisibility and a ring of jumping, and ably wields a wand of paralyzation.

The establishment is named for its star dancing attraction: Jade, a magically animated, incredibly beautiful, life-sized jade statue, fashioned like a human female.<sup>39</sup> Usually found

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Elminster reveals that Jade is a special sort of *figurine of wondrous power*, mentally animated by the owner of the club, the sorceress Cathalishaera. It will crumble into dust if taken more than 200 paces from Cathalishaera or if Cathalishaera should die. She customarily keeps it in a *Leomund's secret chest*, and the tiny half of this item is carried on her person, avoiding the destructive effects of moving the statue too far away.

The sorceress customarily sits in a locked, hidden room during performances, seeing through the statue's eyes and moving it by will in response to the music and the calls of the crowd. She loves this work, but is too shy to ever dare dance in person.



dancing on the stage in acrobatic poses no human dancer with any dignity or nerve endings could endure for long, it begins an evening with no hair but grows illusory flowing hair as it moves—until a floor-length train of tresses flows behind and around it. The hair then vanishes, to begin growing again. The cycle takes about an hour.

## The Provender

A wild variety of drinkables can be had here, from glowing amber dwarven thorl beldarakul (Old Trickster) to cool, minty green shondath icewine, favored by some elves and halflings. Among humans, Al & Tal's Slurp Syrup (well-spiked cherry syrup) is popular, along with Fool's Thirst-Quencher (a mix of six beers and winter wine), and, of course, zzar, which can be had at double strength. All drinks here are 5 sp for a handglass and 1 gp for a tall flagon.

To go with the drinkables, the Dancer staff serves free bowls of salted nuts, loaves of hot garlic-buttered bread (2 sp/round loaf), and skewered roast fowl two to a skewer for 3 sp/skewer. These are small plucked chickens with head, feet, and organs removed, cooked over an open fire.

## The People

The proprietress of the Dancer is the seldom-seen sorceress Cathalishaera, who relies on her bouncer Selcharoon and her staff of about 20 female and 12 male escorts, about half of whom are on shift on a given night, and the house staff of 10 bar and kitchen workers.

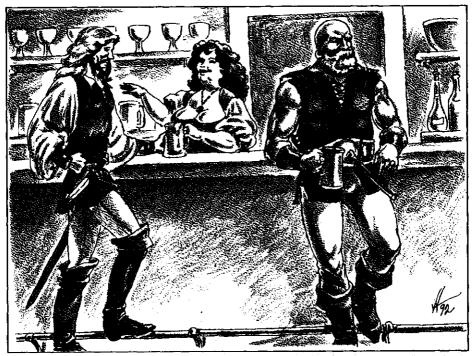
The best-known of the house staff is the fat, talkative, wisecracking lady bartender, Khalou Mazestar. She loves to talk to guests at the bar and is a great source of jokes, information on current fads and interests among the swinging young of Waterdeep, and gossip about who's involved with whom among Waterdeep's noble and monied families. She's especially envious of those people who can afford to festoon themselves with precious jewels, and never tires of hearing or passing on news of Lady Shanderplast's navel carbuncle or Lord Lunkoon's huge emerald earplugs.

#### The Prices

Aside from the bar prices already given, the Dancer charges 2 cp per glass or flagon thrown or broken, and 1 sp per plant eaten or destroyed, and 1 gp per piece of furniture set afire or destroyed. An hour's use of a room key runs 1 gp, with a maximum of 10 gp for use of the room the whole night.

Escorts charge 6 to 12 gp per visit to a room. No extra room charges apply, but the rate covers half an hour or less of the escort's





time. Those who want company for longer must pay multiple charges.

#### Travelers' Lore

Tales connected to the Dancer either have to do with love, legendary drinking bouts, or the Moon Sphere out front. The musicians hired to play here are very good. Come early for a good seat and the least amount of drunken drink-hurling at performers. Bards known up and

down the Sword coast sometimes perform from the hanging gallery. Once, a few winters back, a sylph sang hauntingly mournful love calls and reduced the whole place to tears.

There are persistent whispers about the Jade Dancer being a transformed, trapped human female—perhaps a princess or noble lady. There are also tales of her occasionally taking a male patron up to one of the rooms—and that the men were never seen again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>The tales about the Jade Dancer being a trapped or transformed human are false. So is any reference to "her" enjoying the company of a human man. Elminster says tales of the Jade Dancer leading men to the rooms are probably true. Cathalishaera used to use this method to remove troublemakers or the hopelessly drunk or to get shy men and women together, but it has become too attention-getting, and she no longer does it. Between shows, the Jade Dancer vanishes down through the kitchens and into an air shaft (disused chimney) leading to the upper floors, where she's unlikely to be found by a would-be thief. As disassembled jade, the figurine's body is worth about 9,000 gp.



## Other Places of Interest in Southern Ward

Shops

Nueth's Fine Nets

This shop sells finely made ropes, nets, hammocks, ship shrouds and lines, rope bridges, window and tarp mesh, gauze, and the like. Thieves come here to buy coils of thin, waxed climbing cable at 30 gp per 120'. It is sold in one-piece multiples of that length up to four multiples (480'). A one-man throwing net for fish goes for 7 gp, and a stout tow rope for 20 gp per 100'. Tow rope is available in length multiples up to 10 (1000').

*Proprietor:* Thumir Aingahuth is the sarcastic, rat-faced, but

ever-alert proprietor.\*

# Pelauvir's Counter

This huge, crowded former warehouse sells about everything except food and drink, from pots to lotions and carts to marbles.

*Proprietor:* Braum Pelauvir owns and runs Pelauvir's Counter. He's tall, beefy and jovial.<sup>42</sup>

Aurora's Realms Shop Catalogue Counter

This is the South Ward outlet of Aurora's. Located next to the Red Gauntlet tavern in a crumbling tenement, this shop fronts on the Way of the Dragon. It has four guards, who work in shifts of two and two, a pretty half-elven counter clerk named Mril Juthbuck (an odd name for an elf — Juthbuck is usually a halfling surname), and a darkly handsome, arrogant service-mage named Logros Hlandarr.

#### Tavenns

The Spouting Fish

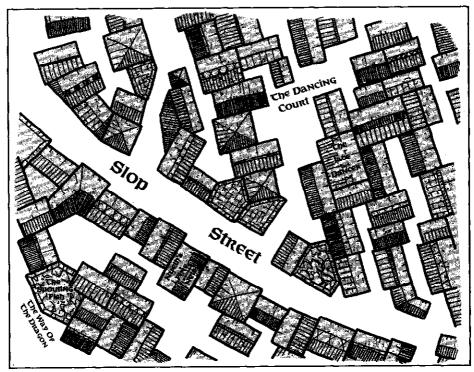
Large, noisy ("A bit like drinking in the thick of a street brawl," one bravo told me, correctly), and popular, this brightly lit establishment succeeds largely because of its relentless street-crying advertising and its strategic location. Many folk entering the city via Southgate get to its huge, upright, spouting fish water fountain and decide they're thirsty.

Inside its a many-leveled labyrinth of booths, benches, posts, and beams, all unpainted and very flammable. Two hired members of the Watchful Order

<sup>42</sup> Location #212 on the color map. Standard *Player's Handbook* prices apply. If a desired item is not listed, extrapolate from a given item—and then add some gold pieces! The shop's floor plan appears on Map 6 of the *City System* boxed set.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Location #209 on the color map. Climbing cable is rated to take the weight of a dozen large men at once and to turn aside daggers. Since it contains twisted wire at its core, 7 hp damage must be applied to a single spot to sever it.





are always on duty because of the fire hazard. Zzar, wines, and beers are available, but the paltry roast fowl, bread, and sausages (1 sp/serving of each) are heavily salted to make you drink more.

*Proprietress:* Janess Imristar is a small, bustling, mousy woman whose loud voice and fearless demeanor belie her size. 43

#### The Red Gauntlet

OOO

This old, shabbily highbrow place is dimly lit. Its booths are always full of old men remembering old battles and slightly shady merchants conducting slightly shady deals in low, muttering voices. There's little food to be had beyond fried fish, waybread, and rabbit-and-fowl stew, and little selection (house wines and house ales), but everything is cheap: 3 cp/platter of food and 2 cp/flagon or tankard. Folk are allowed to drink themselves to sleep here. Those who become noisy or feisty when taken with drink are simply slipped a little sleep syrup in their next drink. Loud snorers are taken to a back room. Others sleep where they sit, watched over against thieves

<sup>43</sup> Location #210 on the color map.





by the proprietor, Daunt Buirune, who knows what to watch for. 44

*Proprietor:* Daunt Buirune, the proprietor, is a retired master thief, although that is not common knowledge.

## The Swords' Rest



This quiet, little-known tavern is the warriors' drinking place, the chosen watering hole of those who swing swords for a living. It is a good place to hire out-ofwork fighting men. This tavern has strong ale, zzar, and exotic drinks from the far corners of the Realms, and there's always a whole ox, boar, or deer—or all three—turning on a spit, so hearty meals (1 sp/platter) can be had at any time. Open from highsun (noon) to dawn, daily.

Proprietor: The proprietor, Beliarge "Old Boar" Maduskar, is called Bel by his friends.<sup>45</sup>

### The Full Cup

8 8



One of the seediest drinking holes in Waterdeep, this battered place is used by bad-tempered drovers and carters. Most are too exhausted to fight when they get

Location #211 on the color map.
 Location #213 on the color map.



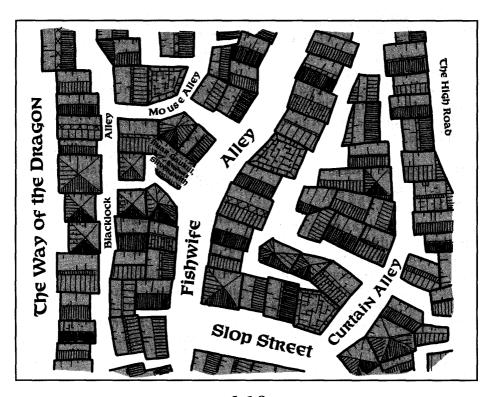
here, which is for the best. It's a small, dim place dominated by a long bar with stools and an impressive, but largely dust-covered, selection of bottles behind it. There's almost always a pile of the remnants of smashed furniture outside the front door.

The Full Cup is notable for three things: the brawls that occur here with distressing regularity the truly incredible cold winter drafts that send icy fingers stabbing into every corner of the place, and the bowls of hot buttered mushrooms (1 cp/large wooden bowl) grown in the taverns own dung cellars. The dung is largely from

the horses and oxen that crowd the streets around, and lies several feet deep in the noisome cellar.

Those who know how to discreetly ask the proprietor (and pay about 5 gp/item) can have items hidden under the dung for a month or less. After that, the hider forfeits the item. Be warned that the city watch searches here regularly for stolen items and the like and once found a buried skeleton with a dagger in its ribs. Patrons merely grunted as the bones were being carried out, "Errh. Someone who didn't pay up."

Proprietor: Gulth Djanczo is







the Full Cup's proprietor, and a nasal-voiced, coldly polite weasel of a man.

## Alleys

South Ward's alleys can be just as dangerous as neighboring Dock Wards—especially for lone walkers late at night. Lantern parties tend to be a half-dozen strong or more. If you carry a light, you draw thieves, thugs, and the like to you—of course, if you don't, you can't see them coming!

Only the most interesting of these back ways appear here. For your own safety see them by

daylight.

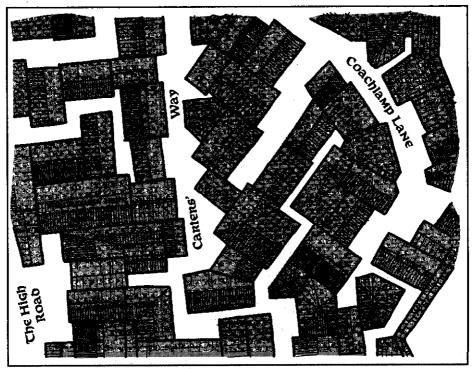
## Blacklock Alley



This long, narrow way runs parallel to the Way of the Dragon south of Brian's Street in the Tween Run area. It is named for the Blacklock, a waist-high stone obelisk about halfway down its length. The Blacklock has a hole worn in it, and youths play games that involve hurling a coconut or rag-and-rock ball through the hole to score points. Local lore says that anyone pure in heart who puts part of their body such as an arm or leg, through the hole will be healed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Location #22l on the color map. *The Knight of the Living Dead* gamebook gives a glimpse of this place (on the page facing entries 84A-84D).





Gangs and sneak-thieves roam this alley. Anyone trying to remove, chip pieces from, or cast spells at the Blacklock will be attacked by a general rising of the neighborhood, all of whom believe the Blacklock brings them luck and wards off any tanar'ri that may roam near.

#### The Forcebar

B

This short, well-traveled passage is named for its intended defensive use. In the event that Waterdeep is invaded, huge sections of stone wall can be magically brought from the ethereal plane to block major roads in the city at strategic points, forming an inner ring of defensible walls. Just south of this alleyway one such wall will block the High Road—and the Forcebar, along with Tilman's Lane, will form a route for defenders along the inside of this wall.

Although at least one gang has used the Forcebar to crash caravan wagons on the High Road by spurring fast carts out of it into contact with them and then launching a sudden and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Elminster says the Blacklock is really a remnant of the altarstone of an old, now-vanished temple to Lathander. It acts as a *cure light wounds* spell on neutral good beings only, once per creature per day.



well-armed attack on the goods and wagon crew this passage is heavily used by both the city guard and the city watch, and so is fairly safe.

## Ilisar's Alley

This alley runs south from Telshambra's Street only to loop around and rejoin it again. Sometimes miscalled Illimar's Alley this street is named for a famous local tailor who grew very rich. When he died of blacktongue fever, the bulk of his wealth was never found. Some think it's buried or walled up in one of the buildings here, because he owned the whole block.

Before Ilisar's time, this back route had a grimmer name: Grave Alley In the days before the wizard Anacaster established *gate*- tombs in the City of the Dead, citizens of Waterdeep too poor to afford a crypt or to have a country villa to be buried at were interred here. Coffins were put in vertically under each flagstone. The eruptions of undead this caused forced abandonment of this practice very

long ago—but locals whisper that sometimes wights, ghouls, zombies, and skeletons come up from the depths of the earth here!

## Mouse Alley

B

This very short, curving run links Blacklock Alley to Brian's Street, just west of Fishwife Alley It is named for a famous mouse that ran along it in front of the wizard Ahghairon and turned out to be, as he suspected, a shapeshifted sorceress of great power—the goddess Mystra, in fact! It is today the haunt of one of Waterdeep's best-if that's the proper term—informants and eavesdroppers: Ruufdeidel "Roove" Ressatar, a short, imp-like little man who is perpetually smiling and has a talent for hiding, moving silently and passing unnoticed. He can usually be found here lounging 48 against a wall awaiting hire.

The alley is said to be sacred to Mystra. Here she aids those faithful to her and punishes any who would harm her faithful taking refuge here.<sup>49</sup>

Of old, the wizard Thunturn,

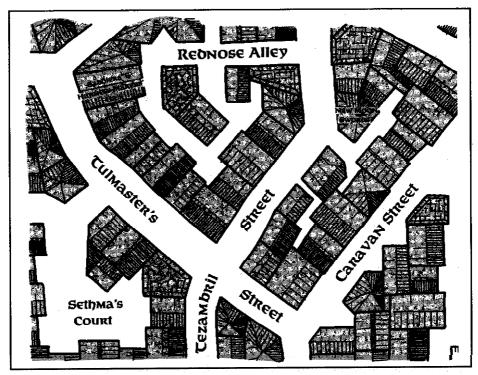
<sup>48</sup> Roove's prices vary with the danger of the snooping task set him, rising from a base of 2 gp/day. For this, he agrees to meet with the client at least once a day at a place mutually agreed upon, but will never accept any work that involves him doing anything more active than leaving a message or sign. He's strictly an eavesdropper, not a thief, go-between, or assassin. He will always have concealed, hired allies

dopplegangers!

present at such meetings to prevent an employer double-crossing him. His allies are mimics and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>Any wizard who worships Mystra (or Midnight) fleeing into this alleyway will be instantly rendered *invisible*, and have any spells they cast since the last time they studied restored to them. In addition, they regain 1 hit point (if they have lost any), and will suddenly realize that they can dimension door out of the alleyway, if they wish. This benefit is lost if they leave the alleyway by other means.





whose hair was white with age, came here in his pride and power to challenge Mystra for mastery of all magic—and she sent him away humble, stripped of all Art, his hair turned jet black from the fright of confronting Her.

#### Rednose Alley

III

This alley runs due west from Tezambril Street, just south of its junction with Robin's Way. The disused warehouses that line it house gangs of homeless youths, drifters who have come to Waterdeep seeking fortune and come up empty-handed, and fugitives from the law. They fight each other often, driven by hunger and boredom—and leap at the chance to attack or rob anyone who passes this way who looks weak enough for a half-dozen or so of them to overcome. The alley's name comes from the many bloody noses they incur fighting with each other when they put away their daggers to avoid swift deaths.

#### Ruid's Stroll



This short, curving passage links Caravan Court with the nearest



Trollwall Tower (the one east of the Redbridle Stables) and is fairly safe thanks to the heavy use by the city guard and the watch. It is named for the ghost of a long-dead mage who appears on foggy nights, walking silently down it with his staff in hand and the cowl of his dark robes drawn over his head. He appears at the Court end in swirling mists and fades away again as he reaches the wall tower.

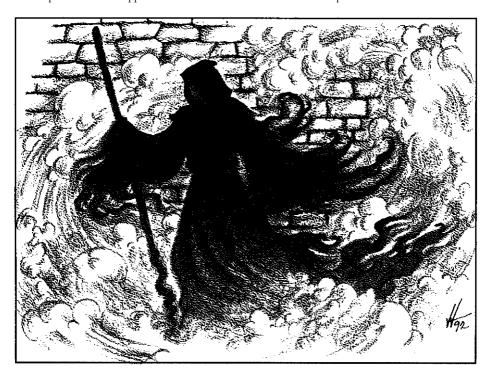
The ghost never reacts to living beings, but it is said anyone who touches or passes through it is shaken by a terrible chill,<sup>50</sup> but thereafter learns a truth.

#### Sethma's Court



Named for an old wise woman who dwelt here until her death some 30 winters ago, this cobbled courtyard is a gathering place for all sorts of birds flying over the city. They drink water from the roof cisterns all around it. No one knows why this place almost magnetically attracts them so.

<sup>50</sup>Contact with this strange phantom, which cannot be turned or dispelled, causes a loss of 1d4+1 hp which can be regained by normal healing means. By means of a note, the DM should inform the player of a character contacting the phantom that they will receive one true, full answer on something they formally request the truth about during future play. This boon works only once per character—but the hit point loss will happen each time the character contacts Ruid's phantom.









# Dock Wand



erhaps the most notorious and colorful of the wards of Waterdeep, Dock Ward is

known to thousands all over Faerun from travelers' tales. Most portray it as a lawless, brawling place of drunks, smugglers, roaming monsters and fell magic, where brawls are frequent.

Those tales aren't far wrong. All they leave out is the heavy city watch patrols<sup>1</sup> and the nonstop, day-and-night work that goes on around all that fun.

The harbor is very much a working place, full of sweating, swearing dock-wallopers loading and unloading vessels, assisted by crewmen. Carts groan hastily to and from warehouses all over the southern half of the city carrying ship goods. Sightseers are not welcome.

Anyone who is crazy enough to want to tour the harbor can rent small boats from Albaeron Halembic of the Fishmongers' Fellowship at the Fish Warehouse.<sup>2</sup> The cost is 4 gp/day or 2 gp/half-day. The boat comes with oars, a small mast, two long fending poles, and a retired fisherman as skipper (who must be kept on board and in command of the vessel at all times).

Those daring or foolish enough to want to delve beneath the waters of the harbor are advised that the city guard keeps a very close watch for smugglers and items dropped for recovery by someone else later. Also, the mermen who patrol the depths do not welcome tourists, and will turn them back promptly.<sup>3</sup>

A further warning for those wishing to sightsee here: Unless the salty tang of rotting fish and sea life holds a special attraction for you, avoid the docks—or do not tarry overlong. I can attest to my cost that when the damp night and evening dew or morning mists are present and the clearing winds aren't strong, the stink of the harbor clings to your clothes and travels with you for almost a day.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> City watch patrols are detailed on page 17 of FR1 Waterdeep and the North. They pass a given point about every 20 minutes and look into a tavern or inn dining room about every half-hour.

As detailed on pages 20-22 and 23 of the City System boxed set booklet, the city guard also patrols Dock Ward in 12-man detachments. Typical patrol details are as given on page 23. Reinforcements will be another dozen LG hm F3s to F6s clad in chain mail and armed with maces, long swords, daggers, slings, and a pole arm appropriate to the situation.

Guard patrols pass a given street location about every half-hour. They appear in 2d4 minutes when a city watch patrol blows a warning horn in Dock Ward.

On the city map in color, the Fish Warehouse is #237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Some details of underharbor features and merman patrols can be gleaned from the *Knight of the Living Dead* adventure gamebook. More is given on pages 25-26 of *Waterdeep and the North.* 



## Landmarks

All sailors who regularly sail into Waterdeep have their favorite taverns and lodgings, but all are familiar with Cookhouse Hall<sup>\*</sup>, the large, echoing, hammerbeamceilinged hall where hot meals (usually roast beef, stir-fried vegetables, and a highly peppered stew) are served to all who line up and pay 2 cp for a meal. Minted drinking water is even provided. You don't have to be a sailor to eat here. It's open from dawn to dusk, and has fed many a weary (or poor or down on his luck) traveler who doesn't mind a little coarse company and dinner conversation.

The Shipmasters' Hall, by contrast, is a private inn and dining club for captains, first mates, and ship owners and their escorts only. It's very old and elegant, with polished dark wood paneling everywhere, shining brass fittings, comfortably cushioned brocade seats, and heavy plush drapes.<sup>5</sup>

One of the largest privately owned buildings in Waterdeep is the shipbuilding shed of Arnagus the Shipwright, who's cratted many of the fine ships that ply the Sword Coast. Owing to the dangers of sabotage and fire, he doesn't welcome visitors, but many folk go to the docks where the slipway from his shed runs down to the harbor to peer in at the work going on. A ship launching always draws great crowds. It's the nearest thing after brawl watching to a spectator sport that Dock Ward has.º

The following guildhalls can all be found in this ward: the Butchers' Guildhall, League Hall, Mariners' Hall, Watermen's Hall, Seaswealth Hall, Coopers' Rest, Shippers' Hall, Shipwrights' House, Hall, Shipwrights' House, Hall, House of Wonders.

The Most Diligent League of Sail-Makers and Cordwainers has as its headquarters the Full Sails tavern. The Muleskull Tavern serves as headquarters for the Dungsweepers' Guild.

Location #230 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Location #243 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Location #252 on the color map. Map 7 of the *City System* boxed set has a floor plan of one of his nearby workshop buildings.

Location #235 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Location #241 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Location #242 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Location #244 on the color map.

Location #250 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Location #255 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Location #256 on the color map.

Location #266 on the color map.

Location #279 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Location #251 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Location #263 on the color map. In all cases, the guild owning the headquarters, and something of its doings, fees, and current heads, is covered in the *Waterdeep and the North* sourcebook.



## The Hanging Lantern

Matchmaker & Festhall

The Lantern, an escort service known for the stunning beauty of its workers, and for the skill of its matchmakers, is famous up and down the Sword Coast.

There are many tales of clients who found a long-lost sweetheart at the Lantern or met the girl or boy of their dreams there. Merchants and the lovelorn come from up and down the Sword Coast to visit the Lantern, which is tucked into a square of shops and warehouses bounded by Shrimp Street, Pressbow Lane, Oar Alley and Ship Street. 18

## The Place

The Lantern is a large, windowless building that rises a full six floors above the street. Thanks to flooding and old sewer tunnels, it has no cellars. It's dim inside, and hushed—except for the constant, gentle flute and harp music. Both the music and the sound-eating, I'm told, are due to magic.

## The Prospect

Folk come to the Lantern for just one purpose, slipping in any of its seven doors into small, intimate rooms. In each room, a matchmaker waits.

There clients are interviewed, pay and are ushered into one of many narrow dark passages and stairs that leads to the room of their chosen. I'm told that not a few stabbings and stranglings occur in these dark passages when one patron lies in wait for another. Selected escorts can also meet clients by appointment. Yes, they make house calls.

The matchmakers seem expert at knowing exactly what clients want—even those who refuse to say. A wizard I met leaving the Lantern, in exchange for my promise not to name her, tells me they're not expert matchmakers, but really dopplegangers! They mind read to learn what folk like, and use their shapechanging to supply it, when their hired girls and boys can't.

The Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors knows their secret, but preserves it, along with their lives and continued operation, in exchange for their solemn promise not to slay any guests. There are rumors of occasional evil outlander wizards disappearing at the Lantern, though.

## The People

No one, not even the Lanterns hired escorts, is sure how many matchmakers work at the Lantern. I'm told there are actually six dopplegangers, but they shift

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> On the color city map, the Hanging Lantern is #262.



their shapes often enough to baffle any exact accounting.

The spokeswoman for the Lantern is a dignified elderly lady of rich dress and cultured manners, but its not known if this is a real person, or a shape taken by more than one 'ganger.

#### The Prices

Escorts can be had for as little as 10 gp for on-the-arm service only. If acting is involved, such as playing a false part in a conversation meant to be overheard or pretending to wealth or identity in business dealings, the minimum fee is 25 gp. If more is desired, fees rise from there to a high of around 75 gp. The matchmakers have an uncanny ability to know how much a client can pay. Discretion is assured.

If a client just wants to hire bodies—a group of folk to accompany her on a stroll or tavern crawl through Dock Ward, say as a bodyguard party, or to fool someone into thinking the client is part of a group or has lots of friends—they can be had for as little as 7 to 9 gp/head per evening. The Lantern has a call list of those down on their luck, and charges 3 gp for the trouble of sending a runner boy for them and providing suitable garb.

#### Travelers' Lore

The business the Lantern do forces it to deal in a little-known



sideline. Its the closest thing to a costume rental service Water-deep has, providing fooling clothing for many occasions. Costumes are sometimes rented out, typically for 1 gp per night. Renters must pay for replacement of any damaged garments.

There are many many tales of finding long-lost heartmates here (thanks to the shapeshifting of the 'gangers), but there are also rumors that drugged captives are kept here to await a slavers' ship or recovery by kidnap gangs. I saw no evidence of that—but I did see carried out the body of an unfortunate merchant who'd met a creditor on the stairs and been a bit too slow with his dagger.



## Helmstar Warehouse

Facing the full fury of winter sea storms howling across the harbor, this warehouse stands on Dock Street, on the northeast corner of its junction with Crookedclaw Alley.<sup>19</sup>

#### The Place

This old, slightly leaning stone structure looks most impressive—in a worn, seedy way. Its carved harpies and wyverns, encrusted with white caps of bird droppings, glare down endlessly on the bustle of the docks.

## The Prospect

The Helmstar Warehouse is presently run by one of the third generation of Helmstars to trade on the docks of Waterdeep: Chuldan Helmstar.

Chuldan is one of the better-known fences of Waterdeep. He buys carvings and statuary of all sorts, no matter how recognizable and hot, for 35% of the current new-made market price. No value is given for any enchantments on or magical powers of items, only on their material, size, and workmanship.

Chuldan is one of very few Waterdhavians allowed by the guilds involved to hold dual membership in guilds that are of ten competitors: the Fellowship of Salters, Packers, and Joiners and the Guild of Watermen. He maintains this rare position by handsome annual payments over and above his dues to both guilds. It allows him to carry on his illicit trade, which is the great majority of his business. Stolen goods find shipboard ways out of Waterdeep in a variety of ingenious packagings devised and constructed by Chuldan and his skilled, discreet staff of fourteen.

## The People

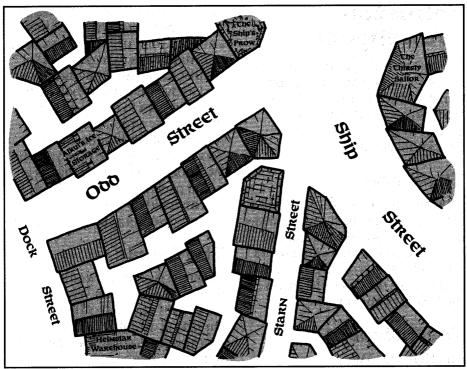
Chuldan is a close-mouthed, bird-like, suspicious man with jet black eyes and hair. Always expecting double-dealing and betrayal, he is steps ahead of foes with contingency plans, escape routes, and surprises up one's sleeve—and seems satisfied when such deceits occur, as if they confirm his forethought and views on the true natures of all intelligent races.

#### The Prices

Chuldan deals in the handling of small cargo, from six barrels or a noble's coach to individual crates bound for friends and colleagues up and down the Sword Coast. His rates are high (2 to 6 gp per container), and he guarantees only same-season delivery. However, he has a large clientele, because he is discreet, takes extra

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>On the color city map, this place is #267.





care in packing to ensure cargo safety and undertakes to threaten, trace, check on, and otherwise persuade hired carriers to make sure cargo they take coin from him to deliver is in fact delivered to the right party as soon as possible.

#### Travelers' Lore

Few bother Chuldan, his goods, or his staff-word of his defenses and means of vengeance has spread. The high-vaulted, crowded warehouse is guarded by a band of margoyles whose loyalty to Chuldan seems unshakable. No one knows exactly how many of these creatures are

lurking around the warehouse and Chuldan's rooftop apartments, or by what means he controls them. They hunt down any who molest him, trespass, or try to steal.

On occasions Chuldan has found it necessary to explain certain things to professionally curious men of the city watch. Usually his explanations concern a severed head, newly added to the end of a row of withered fellow trophies above Chuldan's front counter. Chuldan's words tend to reflect the view that this latest head, like the earlier ones, came in a recently unloaded cargo from far and barbarous



lands, and has something to do, he understands, with barbarian beliefs about guardian spirits that watch over goods while they travel afar. That certain of the heads seem familiar, closely resembling recently vanished rogues and ruffians of the city is something that troubles, puzzles, and indeed mystifies Chuldan over and over again.

Chuldan invites all passersby to poke their noses into his warehouse to see the care he takes over cargo and the speed and volume of his business. He hopes (correctly) that many will be impressed—either to use his services or to refrain from trying

to steal from him.

The lore of Dock Ward says the ghost of Chuldan's famous adventuring father, the bearded and brawling warrior Thalagar, drifts around the warehouse—its sewer door, in particular—in tattered splint mail, battle axe in hands, defending Helmstar territory. The ghost is said to have routed more than one thieving band who used magic to neutralize the margoyles. Thalagar especially hated lizard men, and on certain mist-shrouded nights, old sailors say he can be seen striding silently but speedily along the length of Dock Street, storm-like of visage, axe in hand.

Some of the carvings on the second floor ledge and roof of



the warehouse are crumbling away. A shattered, fallen harpy was recently found on Dock Street one morning below its customary perch. Under it was the flattened body of an unfortunate thief, still clutching the climbing line that had pulled the carving down atop her. Chuldan Helmstar had the missing rooftop carving replaced with a detailed carving that shows a crouching, terrified-looking human female in leathers holding one end of a climbing cord, and took great pleasure in pointing it out to visitors for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> These are always nights when lizard men have come near the harbor (as crew, captives, passengers, or visitors—perhaps disguised—to the city).

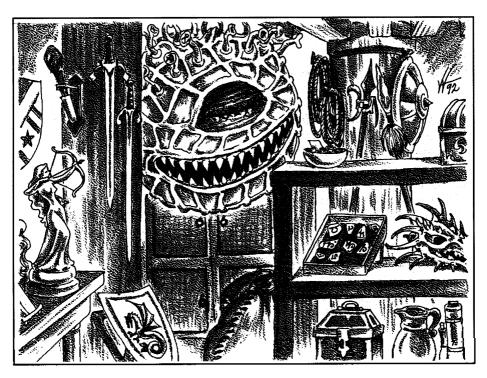


# The Old Xoblob Shop

The Old Xoblob Shop is a curio shop little known outside Waterdeep, but famous in the city for its trophies of battle, adventuring bands, and exotic, faraway places. From drow sculptures to the huge, eyeless, stuffed beholder that overhangs everything, the shop is crammed with an untidy assortment of blades, treasure maps, coils of rope hundreds of feet long, statuettes of forgotten make and mysterious origin, and

more. The shop is named for the beholder, killed by the proprietor in single combat long ago. *Xoblob* is all he could pronounce of its name.

This treasure trove is next door to the Purple Palace festhall, on the northwest corner of the meeting of Fillet Lane and Slut Street. Just two doors down from the Dock Ward outlet of Aurora's Realms Shop Catalogue Counter, the Old Xoblob Shop carries all the things the catalogue chain doesn't, from lizard man tribal boundary marking poles to dwarven runestones bearing treasure messages. For adventurers and con artists, it's the place to find all those necessary props





## that no one else sells anywhere! The Place

The Old Xoblob Shop is a tall, ugly old stone and timber building. Windows are few and dust is plentiful. The street-level floor of the interior is the shop, one huge room with exposed ceiling beams supported by an irregular forest of pillars. One of the pillars, I'm told, is hollow. The jolly proprietor, Dandalus, sometimes uses it to hide shoppers on the run from the city watch or foes, keeping a display rack holding two glowing human skeletons in there the rest of the time.

A stair hidden behind the serving counter leads down to a high-ceilinged basement, containing a bucket flush jakes, which is connected to the sewers via foottreadle trapdoor, a kitchen, and a row of huge wine casks. Dandalus does make his own wine, but one of the casks is hollow. Its front swings open to reveal a hidden room where folk on the run can hide for a fee. A kitchen cupboard has a sliding back opening into the cask, allowing a small person room to squirm out of it or food and drink to be passed in.

Dandulus sells his wine for 2 sp/glass or 1 gp/bottle. He makes a sparkling green among the best wines I've ever tasted. It's worth 10 times what he asks for it.

A broad stair leads up from the shop to a landing, where a narrow stair leads on up to the top floor. Dandalus and his wife live on the top floor in a suite of rooms connected to a roof garden. The landing also opens into a large storage loft that fills the second floor. It is windowless, has a 60-foot-high ceiling, and is usually nearly empty—a good thing, too, because a teleport from a certain spot on the second level of the dungeon of Undermountain brings adventurers (and sometimes monsters!) here.<sup>21</sup> The chamber is lit by a driftlight (glowing globe), and contains an alarm-gong that rings whenever any weight is added to the room's floor.

Dandalus usually calls out cheerfully "Come down smiling! No weapons out, please!" He also, just in case, reaches under the counter for his wand of paralyzation. He has standing arrangements with Khelben Arunsun and with the manager of the Three Pearls Nightclub, Xandos Waeverym, for the disposal of paralyzed monsters. Adventurers are usually relieved of their weapons, and obvious spellcasters are hand-hobbled and hooded before the paralysis wears off. If the shop is closed, Dandalus or his wife will be upstairs, the wand with them,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> The Old Xoblob Shop, the *gate* linking it to Undermountain, and the *driftlight* magic item are all detailed in the *Campaign Guide to Undermountain*, in the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set. See page 12 for an illustration of Dandalus and page 115 for *driftlight* details.





and will act the same. I'm told Dandalus has a backup wand that deals damage of some sort.<sup>22</sup>

The top floor apartments are private, but I've learned herbs are grown on the roof, that there is a little bower there for relaxing and romance on soft-starred summer nights, and that the third floor contains at least two guest bedrooms.

## The Prospect

The Old Xoblob Shop is perhaps the best source of curios, trophies, and out-of-the-ordinary adventurers' gear in six worlds according to Khelben,<sup>23</sup> and the wine there is also first-rate. Dandalus cheerfully buys all sorts of bric-a-brac, paying a sixth of its worth. He is especially fond of things he can resell as spell components—or as genuine, noguarantees magic items.

The shop is not a good place for thieves or the belligerent. The stuffed beholder is hollow, and conceals a hired wizard who can fire a wand of paralyzation out of its mouth to take customers by surprise. (Yes, this is a second wand of the same type. For all I know, Dandalus has a box of them under the bed upstairs!) Dandalus himself is a walking arsenal of magic, his wife has surprises of her own, and the shop bristles with concealed boobytraps to deter miscreants, including some Dandalus can trigger from afar. The shop also sports some not-so-hidden protections, such as an iron golem, Guraim the Gentle Persuader; who stands in a corner of the shop, spending most of his time as a rack for colored, scented candles.

## The People

Dandalus "Fire-Eye" Ruell is a balding, bearded, big-bellied

Elminster agrees.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>This backup wand, Elminster reveals (he made it), is a special *wand of magic missiles*. Each triggering releases a burst of either 6 or 12 bolts (as the wielder mentally directs: half or full power). The wand is linked to three other wands hidden inside a wall of the shop and can call on their charges via a special linkage—so each missile drains a charge in the usual way, but the wand in effect has 300 extra charges to expend!



fellow who's always cheerful and sees life for the long running joke that it so often is. He makes no enemies. Those who attack or swindle him he merely charges double or more. He is always clad in breeches with bulging pockets, sometimes overlaid by an apron whose pockets are just as crammed. The pockets' contents always include a selection of lockpicks, skeleton keys, small tools, and garment pins for distressed ladies with torn garb.<sup>24</sup>

Arathka Ruell (lovingly called Rella by Dandalus) tends to the cleaning and cooking, but is just as charming and learned a shopkeeper as her man, if quieter. Unlike Dandalus, she doesn't dispense bad jokes and puns by the dozen. She's a priestess of some sort, but I never learned what power she serves. She's not forthcoming about it.<sup>25</sup>

The wizard hired by the Ruells is an ugly one-legged, misshapen, and therefore very shy, little man who is fiercely loyal and protective of his employers. His name is Hlondaglus Shrim, and he spends all the time the shop is open, from an hour after dawn to two hours after dusk, up in the beholder, eating sandwiches and whittling. He's the source of occasional showers of shavings that drift down to settle on shoppers and shop alike.

#### Travelers' Lore

The wares in this shop have their own lore, hundreds of little tales of dark magic, betrayal, and wild adventures. The shop itself is well-known to neighbors for the deeds of Dandalus, such as the time he wrestled a mimic to death in the street outside and the time a lich came through the gate. Spells in plenty burst out the windows of the shop before the undead creature was destroyed (by Arathka, the whispers say).

Dandalus refuses to go adventuring, but has been known to come to the rescue of friends and long-time customers trapped in Undermountain. He once waded into a brawl started by half-orcs in a nearby tavern, the Sleeping Wench, and laid out every combatant involved. When an arriving watch patrol mistook him for the source of the trouble, he laid them all out cold too. (Once the matter was settled, he treated the patrol to some of his wine.)

This is definitely a shop to collect such tales. Dandalus can tell you the lore or supposed lore of most of what he sells, and can recall the deeds of adventurers in and around Waterdeep for the last 30 years or so. He likes to talk. Those looking for treasure leads should pay him a visit and buy wine to talk over.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>For details of the arsenal of magic Dandalus carries on his person, see the "Folk of Waterdeep" appendix at the back of this book.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The "Folk of Waterdeep" section also speaks of Arathka's faith and powers. Elminster knows all. <sup>26</sup>Any attempts to *charm* Hlondaglus to do anything hostile or harmful to the Ruells will automatically break the spell and goad Hlondaglus into a killing rage.



# Serpent Books & Folios

This is one of the dustiest but most exclusive shops in Water-deep. Some have called it the single best source of maps, charts, and books in all the Realms—and most wizards I've known agree. Located in a modest sandstone shopfront on the east side of Book Street, I Jannaxil Serpentil's shop is frequented by those who have come from afar in search of the rare, the unusual—and a chance to sell stolen goods.

# The Place

The battered Serpentil sign hangs above an old, unkempt stone building whose wares window is boarded over, and whose black door entry is always forbiddingly closed. (When Jannaxil is open for business, a small, sliding viewing panel in the upper part of the door is left open.) Magical guardian glyphs adorn both the boards and the doors and glow faintly after dark. Few care to try their power.

Inside, the shop is very dark. It is crammed with deep-hued bookshelves, and the walls are paneled with wood. The sole light here comes from magical glowing globes that drift about at

Serpentil's will. Powerful fireguards spells prevent anything from igniting.

Aside from Jannaxil's desk and three chairs (two for visitors), books are the furnishings of this shop. More books are piled and shelved together here than most folk of Faerun will ever see.

# The Prospect

Jannaxil handles all sorts of printed materials, from magical tomes to maps and charts of the Sword Coast waters. He likes to warn folk sagely that spellbooks give off green flames when they burn. Magical tomes and Sword Coast maps are his two specialties, but he can also find you a tome of folktales of Cormyr or the collected ballads of the long-dead bard Delshryn of Mirabar.

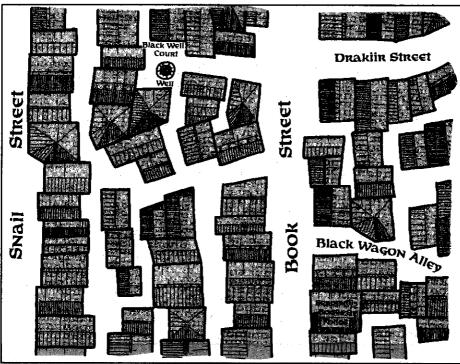
Jannaxil also buys printed lore, and is a cold, hard haggler. He gives 30% of the market value of all items he knows to be stolen. If any sort of literary theft occurs in Waterdeep, he typically knows about it by the next day!

# The People

Most people think of Jannaxil Serpentil as just a nasty, cold-mannered old scholar, but from earlier magical researches I know him to be at least a dabbler in magic and far older than he looks. He is no doubt protected by magic, and has been known to

 $<sup>^{\</sup>it 27}$  On the color city map, Serpentil Books & Folios is #275.





clutch a certain slim black volume to his breast when attacked in his shop. Most folk think its just his account book—but I think it contains a tome guardian<sup>28</sup> monster that he uses to protect himself. There is much of the coward about him.

If Jannaxil has any family or staff, none have ever seen them. He is thought to sleep above his shop, in windowless apartments. Rumor says they include a large spellcasting chamber where Jannaxil conjures up baatezu to do his bidding.

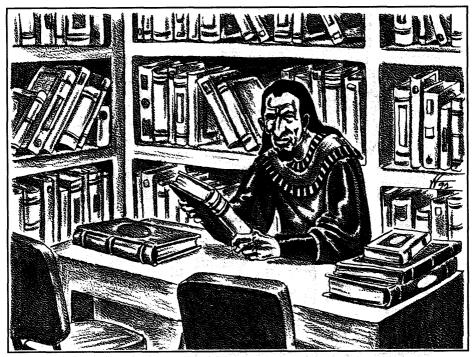
#### The Prices

No deals with Jannaxil come cheap. Even the shabbiest chapbook will set you back at least 1 gp. Shoplifters are warned that Jannaxil has some way of knowing when one of his wares is leaving unpaid for, and that a binding spell prevents the guilty party from exiting. Jannaxil never confronts anyone, but simply waits for them to remove the hidden object and either pay for it or set it down and leave.

Most useful tomes, such as engineering instructions, math-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> The tome guardian monster is detailed in the sourcebook FR4 *The Magister.* Jannaxil might well have trained or allied monsters, too, such as watchspiders (detailed in FOR2 *The Drow of the Underdark* and in *The Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set) and mimics.





ematical texts, noble family histories, and detailed studies of the geography and history of a particular area, cost 15 to 50 gp.

Spellbooks are in unreliable supply, of course, and are purchased as is, with no guarantees as to the absence of curses or the efficacy of the spells within. Jannaxil typically charges a base price of 50 gp for each one plus 300 gp per spell or spell fragment contained within. Spells of the fourth or greater level command a surcharge of 1000 gp per spell. Spells of 7th level and up add 3000 gp each to the cost of a book. It is likely Jannaxil copies the useful spells from books he sells for himself, but no one has ever

found his cache of magic. Locals talk in the taverns of long crawltunnels where guardian monsters lurk, leading to a private study where Jannaxil keeps powerful magic.

Jannaxil does book searches for a deposit of 10 gp plus 4 gp per year thereafter. If the book is found, he charges double the

usual price for it.

Papers (accounts and letters) find their way most often to Jannaxil's shop. He does a brisk business in blackmailing Water-dhavians with love letters and the like that a malicious or careless person sold to him. Jannaxil typically buys such wares for 1 to 5 copper pieces a



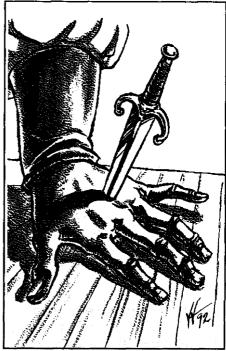
sheet, and sells them for 1 sp per sheet or more.

# Travelers' Lore

It seems that Jannaxil's shop has always been there, but old Water-dhavians tell me its been open some 60 years or so. During that time, Jannaxil has carried on running feuds with several scholars of the city—feuds carried on in the form of insulting gestures, gifts, and letters, or in ditties that tavern singers have been hired to perform in their taverns, for the amusement of all.

Jannaxil's cowardice has led him to pile up so many magical defenses that most folk think him to be a powerful wizard. There are many tales of thieves being blasted off his roof, or torn apart in the street outside his shop by huge black talons that appeared from thin air after they disturbed one of the boards covering his wares window.<sup>29</sup>

Jannaxil is said to have a special hatred of elves. He was recently wounded by Elaith "the Serpent" Craulnobur—who



pinned one of his hands to his desk with a thrown dagger. 30

Jannaxil loves good books. He hungers to look inside just about any book he sees or hears of, especially illuminated tomes, old maps, and well-illustrated volumes depicting female beauty. He is known to pay extremely well for such things.

Thirty-three of the glyphs are *spell turning* magics (enough will activate in combination to reflect back any spell 100% at the source).

Thirty-three more are *Caligarde's claw* magics (a spell detailed in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Ad ventures* hardcover). Some 2d4 of them will animate to attack any one being who tries to remove a board, pick the lock of Jannaxil's door, remove or harm the door, or chisel (or work magic on, including the writing of runes) any part of Jannaxil's shop walls.

The last 33 glyphs are magic missile spells. Any being flying up to the roof of Jannaxil's shop or forcing a magical or physical way through walls, floors, or roof will be struck by 2d12 of these missiles, and a magical alarm will awaken Jannaxil to full alertness of their activation, wherever he may be in Faerun

<sup>30</sup>As related in the novel *Elfshadow*, by Elaine Cunningham.

 $<sup>^{29}</sup>$  Elminster tells us the self-renewing guardian glyphs on the shop are 99 in number. A *dispel magic* will negate any one glyph (only) for 1 turn per level of its caster. Glyphs can fire once per day and are ready again 24 hours (144 turns) later.



# Three Pearls Nightclub

Pearls, as it is called, is a popular evening destination for Waterdhavians, offering stand-up comics, trained animal acts, illusionists' recitals, bards, orators, and exotic dancing." name comes from its purchase price. When the owner of the tavern that stood here (the Black Buckler) decided sourly he'd lost his last gold piece pouring ale down parched throats and offered to sell the place to anyone who'd give him the price of a meal, one of his own dancers stopped up on the stage, tore off three black pearls—nearly all she was wearing—and threw them to him, claiming the place as her own. The dancer, Halidara Urinshoon, is seldom on stage these days. She's too busy eating chocolates and drinking amberjack sherry in North Ward while her riches pile up.

Almost every evening, crowds stream up Pearl Alley to the Three Pearls, except on nights when a guild or other large group rents it for a meeting or for private entertainment. Typically it rents out at prices ranging from 50 gp for the space to 100 gp for the space and shows thrown in, cash up front.

# The Place

The Three Pearls is now one huge room (plus jakes, opening off a cloak hall down one side). It has a low ceiling and is usually hot and smoky. Stout low-backed wooden benches radiate outwards from the raised central stage, which is lit from above and has a ramp entrance up into its center via trapdoor from below. The central stage has a conical raised ceiling above it, complete with a retractable circular staircase and drop ropes for dramatic entrances.

# The Prospect

On the stage of the Pearl, men have raised armies, women have raised eyebrows, and everything from yeti through trolls have made jaws drop, bellies shake with helpless laughter, and hands itch to hurl things. On a typical night, comics alternate with dancers, musicians, and acting troupes—of ten presenting satirical ballads or sketches related to recent city events. More than once Piergeiron or Khelben has been portrayed as a buffoon, to the audience's great amusement.

# The Provender

The Three Pearls offers finger food (hot sausages inside crisp-fried buns, pickles, and cream-coated fruit, all at 2 cp/serving),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> On the color city map, Three Pearls Nightclub is #273.





and drink—lots and lots of drink. Drinks are served in light clay cups that can't be thrown too far or do much damage.

A special, advertised attraction shouted out by boys at the door and on nearby streets, when available, is monster fare, such as baked stirge on toast, roast manticore, or wyvern steaks. These rarities command high prices, sometimes going for up to 7 gp/serving. Folk buy them mainly so that they can casually claim for the rest of their lives, as

a conversation crusher, to have eaten such-and-such.<sup>32</sup>

# The People

Too many performers of note nave trod the stage at Pearls to list them here, from the fabled bard Mintiper to the orator Phaeros "Forktongue" of Baldur's Gate.

The owner of the Pearls seldom visits her gold mine these days, but meets daily with the manager to book acts and plan publicity.

The manager, Xandos Waeve-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>Adventurers are paid well for fresh kills, and even more for live. The more fearsome reputation a nonhumanoid monster has, the better price it fetches. Eggs fetch a lower price, and undead, poisonous, and petrifying beasts, or human-like creatures such as trolls and ogres, are not wanted at all. Recently, the Company of the Flaming Boot sold a nearly intact, dead hatchling white dragon to the Pearls for 500 gp—a price the nightclub made back several times over by selling sizzling white dragon steaks for 10 to 20 gp each, depending on size.



rym, is known as "the Dandy" around Waterdeep: a dapper, strutting little popinjay of a man, pompous and comical—but deeply committed to entertaining, and with a keen sense of humor and a reading for what the public will go for. He oversees a staff of 14 bouncers, 16 run-and-shout street boys, 12 dancers, and a house bard (currently Zalanthess-daughter-of-Zalanthar, an accomplished singer and harpist from Neverwinter).

# The Prices

There is a 3 cp cover charge at the door (4 to 5 cp on some special nights), and everything inside costs extra. In addition to the food, beer goes for 1 cp/cup, house wine (very bad) for 2 cp/cup, good wine for 1 sp/tallglass, and zzar for 4 sp/tallglass.<sup>33</sup>

Patrons can also buy peering glasses, which are curved glass lenses that magnify things for those far from the action, for 2 gp each. Hurl birds are also for sale for 2 cp/each to throw at the stage to register disapproval or pleasure. These small hollow clay spheres are weighted with dried beans for good throwing and are covered with glued-on feather scraps gathered from nearby fowl-pluckers. They are too light to damage more than the dignity of performers.

Patrons also tend to spend coins by throwing them at the stage. There are no rooms for rent, and cloak storage is free. Outer garb is watchfully guarded while stored against thieves and pranksters, though patrons can pay—usually 1 sp/message—the guards to slip a message parchment into a particular garment in order to pass notes.

There are three private boxes. These look down through windows in the ceiling at its edge where the conical central roof peak begins to rise. These small rooms can each hold up to 10 people crammed together, and can be rented for 10 gp/evening. These have long waiting lists.

A fourth private box is reserved by the nightclub for its own use, and is often offered for free to Piergeiron or Khelben if they show up to take in an evening's fare. These two personages usually donate 25 gp or more to the club's coffers, but other dignitaries may give nothing.

# Travelers' Lore

Some say the Pearls is haunted by the phantoms of a running, weeping woman pursued by a man with a drawn sword—but I couldn't find anyone who could recall any details of this rumor, or that the haunting had been seen recently.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>A tallglass is just what it sounds like: a very tall, thin glass made by sealing a bone tube at the bottom with curved, fired clay. It is hard to spill and easy to carry in the crowd—but a neighbor can easily cause a drinker to choke with skillful use of an elbow when the long glass swings up!



# The Thirsty Sailor

Tavern

iii d

This infamous dive faces the Ship's Prow across the intersection of Fish and Ship Streets. It is on the east, whereas the Ship's Prow commands the west side.<sup>34</sup>

# The Place

This ugly, poorly built tavern began as fieldstone with wooden upper levels, but many fires and wild brawls with magic as well as axes and hurled tables have changed its face. Hasty patches have been made with more vigor than skill, and little enough enthusiasm. Of scavenged, mismatched materials, they thrust like uneven buttresses from the burn-scarred, boarded-over walls. Not a window remains at street level. Those higher up look more like trapdoors than portals to admit light or air.

# The Prospect

The interior of the Thirsty Sailor is no better than its battered exterior. This is the sort of place all gentler folk think every sailors' drinking hole is: one filthy lawless, ongoing drunken brawl, where the only patrons who aren't fighting or roaring

curses or bawdy songs are those who have already passed out.

Its so rough that none of Waterdeep's hard currency girls will venture into the place. Any woman one meets there is as hard-drinking a sailor or dock-walloper as the rest of the clientele, with fists to match. One has a piece of my ear as a keepsake, but that's another story.

Candles are few and soon broken. Night or day the Thirsty Sailor is smoky and ill-lit. This would make it ideal for shady deals—if it weren't so noisy, and you weren't so apt to slip in spilled drink, or find a thief's fingers or a bored drinkers fist uncomfortably close. A fair bit of hushed business does go on among those wise enough to rent an upper room.

# The Provender

The Thirsty Sailor manages to achieve its minimal rating for one reason only: If the first cause of visiting a tavern is to drink, and another is to be entertained with a brawl or two, then this tavern meets those requirements admirably The drink here is strong, not watered (1 cp/tankard for beer, 3 cp/whisky and 1 sp/firewine). And one never wants for brawls to watch, though it's often hard to remain a nonparticipant with the tables crowded so close together.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> This place is #269 on the color city map.





# The People

The proprietor is Kaeroven "Smiles" Yuluth, a tall, rotund, unpleasant-looking man with tiny deep-set eyes whose stare is as hard and cold as two dagger points. He has blond, curly hair and is clean-shaven, with razor scars to prove it. His nickname comes from the fact that no one has ever seen him smile save when he's dragging the latest corpse to the rear of the tavern for disposal into the sewers.<sup>35</sup>

Smiles wears a magical ring—a ring of regeneration of the

vampiric sort, I believe, from what I saw happen to wounds he suffered in a brawl he waded into the midst of—and is almost always clad in a blood-smeared apron that reeks of cheap women's perfume and bears the stitched legend: "See Neverwinter by Night/Bring a Blade and Live Longer!" Why the apron smells of perfume I dared not ask him. No one else seemed to know

Kaeroven is known to be a contact and information gatherer for the Kraken Society<sup>36</sup> and to sometimes hire thieves and bravos to steal some item or

More about the Kraken Society is in FR5 The Savage Frontier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>The Sailor and much of the immediate neighborhood is on the oldest of Waterdeep's sewers, the tidal flush Smugglers' Runs: ancient, crumbling tunnels that a small pole-punt can slip through that empty right into the harbor.



rough up a citizen. He no doubt acts for someone who pays to have the deed done, but doesn't want to be connected with it.

Many in Dock Ward suspect he is linked to shadowy unnamed smuggling concerns—and even say these provide him with most of his income. I've heard rumors of Calishite connections and even talk of the kidnapping of citizens to sell them into slavery in Calimshan! Those who cross Kaeroven openly do have a habit of tragically disappearing very soon.

Smiles maintains a staff of seven bouncers and six surly dwarven waiters. There are no barmaids or any women on staff and no houseboys to clean up broken glass and spills, presumably because protecting them from drunken patrons would be endless work. One bouncer is rumored to be a doppleganger who impersonates murdered patrons when the Watch calls.

Kaeroven's sidekick, errand runner, and spy is a furtive, rat-like man who goes by the grand name of Winestab. He habitually eavesdrops on most upper room conversations—from the roof above, if need be. This unsavory sneak thief's proper name is Aldaeguth. Some older citizens remember him as Oldy-gut, but his surname (if any) and origins remain obscure. Winestab has a vicious temper and long memory Many have found him a dangerous, persistent foe. His habit of

surviving traps set for him argues that he has one or more magic items down his boot when he goes out to stalk the roofs, sewers, and alleys of the City of Splendors by night.

# The Prices

An upper room rents for 1 gp per evening or any part of it, or 4 gp for the night. There are no beds nor sanitary facilities save the alley behind (via windows). Renters must bring their own lights. There are no locks, but doors can be barred from inside. The rooms are too dirty to tempt anyone sober enough to see or smell to put them to any romantic uses—or any other uses, like sleep. Most who use the rooms are lowlives plotting clumsy crimes or smuggling deals.

# Travelers' Lore

A certain dark-cloaked, softspoken man is seen in the Sailor trom time to time—a man whose teatures are hidden by a mask and a hood, who sometimes visibly shifts form into a female body as he leaves, and who is almost certainly a mage of some power. At least once, this one met in the tavern with other shrouded folk who must have been, by what they inadvertently revealed, mind flayers. All in all, this tavern—if not as large and noisy as, say the Bloody Fist nearby—is a dangerous spot.



# The Ship's Prow

Inn

iii aaaa

As its name suggests, this inn juts into the broad, usually crammed, meeting of Fish Street and Ship Street like the front of a rather fat ship. It's well-known among sailors up and down the Sword Coast. More than that, it's well thought of, and if my stay is to be trusted, justly so. Its best suited to folk who can stand the fishy stink of deep-sea traps and brine barrels—and the noises of dock work, drunken revelry and fighting, the night throughwafting into their rooms.

# The Place

The Ship's Prow rises four floors above the street. Years of wind and weather have turned the old boards of its upper floors and outside balconies silvery. In the moonlight on a clear night, it gleams from afar down the dark dockside streets. Inside, the floors are so warped that they rise and fall in smooth curves, like the deck of a ship in the swells. The place is shabby, but feels comfortable and homelike.

# The Prospect

This inn is surprisingly quiet inside, and a cozy place to sleep

as such things are judged in Dock Ward. It provides an ideal haven for tired travelers newly arrived in the city and not flush enough to find beds in a better area. Its also a trysting place for masked young nobles of Waterdeep out on a lark, not wanting to be seen by their peers (I marked at least 11 such couples on my stay), and a refuge for drunken sailors looking for a bed to snore in, rather than things to smash or bodies to cuddle or punch.

#### The Provender

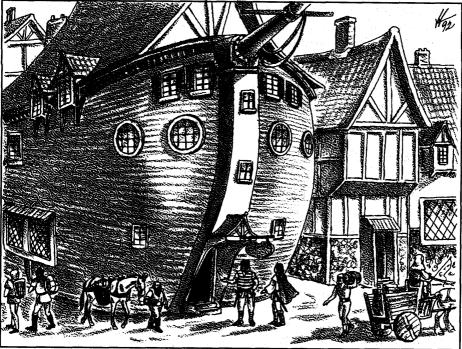
There's nothing stronger than water to be had, nor can you get anything more to eat than smoked firefin, strong cheese, and hardloaf bread, bolstered in winter only with a bowl of hot fish-head soup (for 1 sp a person, in addition to room rates). The water is brought by the barrel from wells near Amphail and laced with crushed mint. It stands in jugs in every room, and can also be had for the asking as clear, hot tea.

# The People

The inn's peace and survival in the face of the ever-present danger of fire is due to the interwoven protective spells of the resident wizard and parttime cook, Shryndalla "Were-Eye" Ghaulduth. She's an ugly but cheerful old soul who pads

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> On the color city map, the Ship's Prow is #268.





around in worn slippers and food-stained robes, accompanied by an entourage of cats.<sup>38</sup>

The master of the house is a one-eyed, scarred and silverbearded retired sailor, Jhambrote Harkhardest. He's genial and soft-spoken, but ever alert—and never lacks a short sword and an axe at his belt. The axe is magical. I saw an eye open on its blade and swivel around to take in all present. It winked shut in an instant when it saw me watching, but I saw what I saw.

Jhambrote doesn't go out much, and has standing arrange-

ments with the guilds for supplies. He turns away rowdy would-be guests and those dealing in shady goods with cold looks and grim words, and seems to have no truck with smugglers—nor with the city watch.

# The Prices

Rooms can be had for 4 sp to 1 gp per night (larger rooms and higher floors are dearer), or 3 gp to 7 gp per ten day. Most are 6 sp per night or 5 gp per tenday.

Linen is changed daily and the fee buys a single bath per night, if one desires, stabling for a single

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Warning: Shryndalla's cats spy for her! Don't meet someone on the sly here if you don't want her to know. The cats climb along the outside walls and slip along hidden passages. You'll hear the soft thumps as they pounce on rats and mice alike at all hours.



animal, and unlimited drinking water. I, myself, would advise not availing oneself of a bath in harbor water, which smells of fish or worse. The stabling is around the back and is crowded and unheated, but feed is provided for stabled mounts.

# Travelers' Lore

I'm given to understand<sup>39</sup> this inn is notorious among longtime inhabitants because it once housed evil beings of the infamous Cult of the Dragon. The Lords of the City are said to have given the present proprietor title to the place to keep an eye on it after the spectacular passing of

his predecessor.

About 20 winters back, the inn was kept by one Halagaster Brutheen, who acquired it in mysterious circumstances from Ulcap Rhiddyn, who just disappeared one day. When the Brandished Blade, a company of adventurers, came to stay (by chance, most say), the fury of the gods reigned in the Ship's Prow—for on sight they knew Halagaster as a magically disguised red dragon on the run from them. This Halagaster-wyrm had devoured the unfortunate

Rhiddyn and taken his place, aided and paid court to here by the fell folk of the Dragon Cult.

There was great battle that night, and if the Watchful Order had not been alert and plentiful, much of the ward might well have burned. In the end, the wyrm was slain, and the Dragon Cult routed through the streets. No trace was found of the wyrm's hoard. Cultists have skulked about the inn and kept a watchful eye over it ever since-seeking the dragons hoard or something else of value they've not yet found.

Some say the dragon hollowed out a large cellar beneath the place, devouring unfortunates whose adjoining cellars he broke into. No trace of such a warren has been found, and a docker I talked with told me that in that area a large cellar would soon flood or buildings above would collapse down into it.

When I asked host Harkhardest about this disguised dragon, he rolled a slow and cold eye around to stare levelly into my gaze, and suggested I talk to the city watch, if I was so very interested in such dangerous

<sup>39</sup> My source is Shabra the Beggar Queen, an old, stout, rather unwashed woman who styles herself an expert on Dock Ward. She can often be found at the Spitting Cat tavern, nursing a cup of broth-and-brandy as the hours pass. She can be induced to talk of doings and news of the area for the price of a good meal.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> When I tackled Shryndalla alone on the same subject, she laughed, said she'd heard about me from some of her arcane colleagues, winked, and would say no more. I suspect she was referring to the unfortunate reception that *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical* received, but I wrapped myself in dignity as if it were a fine cloak and turned our talk to lighter matters. Several times since, though, I have seen Shryndalla's cats watching me, as I walk the streets of the city.



# The Blushing Mermaid

Tavern, Inn, & Festhall

# iiii ooo yyy

The Mermaid is one of the most luxurious establishments in Dock Ward. Everything is unhurried, luxurious, and sensual, with no detail overlooked. The staff wear facemasks of black armor plate with attached black gauze veils to conceal their faces.

# The Place

Fronting on Net Street within easy reach of the harbor stenches, the Blushing Mermaid spans three buildings. Scents stream from amber hanging lamps. Gauzy curtains, cushions, and sound-eating carpets are everywhere. Special, extremely expensive enchantments prevent any sort of open flame from igniting them. Even fire magic is foiled. Every guest has a plush, decadent private bedroom, a private bathroom, and an office/reception room in which to entertain.

It is widely known that the Mermaid is honeycombed with secret passages, reached by sliding wall panels in every room—but few guests manage to get those panels to work.

# The Prospect

The original light pleasure palace of Waterdeep, combining a place to stay with places to drink and have fun, the Mermaid has always catered to the wealthy by maintaining an atmosphere of quiet decadence. The Mermaid bends most of its attention to creating a cozy atmosphere for festhall activities – and so its food and tavern facilities suffer. True to its name, the Mermaid does offer one special drinking and dining experience: a heated, scented communal bath in which patrons soak as they eat and drink, served by mermaids, who swim in from the harbor via well-guarded secret tunnels.42 Messy foods can simply be washed away in the lavendertinted waters.

# The Provender

Seafood—and, surprisingly, whole roast pig—are the specialties of the Mermaid's kitchens. Everything is good, if a little underseasoned, but runs expensive: 1 gp to 3 gp/person per meal. Drinks are extra, with a full wine cellar (1 gp to 22 gp/bottle, depending on your choice), plentiful zzar (the almond-flavored sherry favored by many in Waterdeep) at 1 sp/glass, and very ordinary beer at 2 cp/tankard.

<sup>41</sup> On the color city map, the Blushing Mermaid is #249.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>These tunnels were no doubt used for smuggling in bygone days, but they are now blocked by locked gratings with alarms, and are used by mermen and mermaids to report for shifts at the Mermaid and to dine: a special section of the Blushing Mermaid's kitchens cater to the merfolk.



# The People

The Mermaid has a busy staff of over 20 very efficient, hardworking maids who frequently give personal attentions to the needs of guests. They get to keep any tips tossed their way, and also get a percentage of all the Mermaid's earnings. A seven-foot-tall, muscular blonde of northern barbarian stock named Reetha is widely known around the city as is an agile lass from the jungles of Chult, Leilatha Subraira, who is covered from head to toes in tattoos and likes to oil her skin to keep them colorful and herself hard to grab.

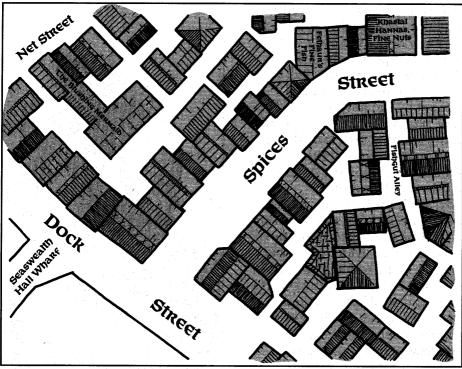
The pleasant atmosphere of the Mermaid is an enforced

serenity. Patrons and staff are guarded against rowdiness and violence by the watchful eye and ready spells of the proprietress, Lady Alathene Moonstar. The secret panels can only be opened by her hand—or by four magical hands fashioned of silver, enchanted by her and carried by staff members on security duty. If one goes missing, she alters the pass spells within a few hours.

Lady Alathene is old and very beautiful, her beauty kept up by magic. She glides silently around the Mermaid dressed in full formal gowns with ornate, upthrust bodices and head veils, often wearing the same sort of facemask as her staff.







She is quick to use her magic, and fearless when facing down even drunken mages—I saw her employ disabling spells I've seen nowhere else, harmlessly confining a belligerent drunkard without injury to him or to the surroundings.

# The Prices

Rooms are 3 gp to 9 gp per night (larger rooms and lower floors are dearer), or 10 gp to 50 gp per tenday. Most are 5 gp per night or 20 gp per tenday. Scents of your choice, fresh linen as needed, and unlimited, sparkling clear, scented bath water (obviously procured from elsewhere or

magically cleaned) are all included in these prices.

Tipping is common. Some regular visitors give a standard 1 gp/day extra and ask that it be shared among the staff, as well as giving extras to those escorts who see to them personally.

#### Travelers' Lore

There are several pleasant stories, probably pure legend, about men and mermaids falling in love with each other in the pool and leaving either land or water with the help of the young man's magic, or the help of a friendly wizard, to be together.

The custom of the Hour of



Darkness provides many amusing tales and naughty pranks. In the early hours of each morning, all lights in public areas of the Mermaid are extinguished, and aside from the silver hands carried by the staff, which give off a blue-silver glow like moonlight gleaming on a sword, everyone has to find their way about by feeling. This custom causes much laughter.

In addition, there are darker whispers—of guests sometimes vanishing in the Mermaid, never to be heard of again. These tales seem to be linked to a circular staircase rising from the central mermaid pool hall to a glass-covered rooftop garden or cupola, where herbs and flowers are grown. It is adorned with bones bound to its rails and risers with fine wire. 43

<sup>43</sup>Elminster tells us the tales of disappearing guests are true-and are due to the Lady Alathene Moonstar, an archlich whose unlife is maintained by faulty, failing enchantments. She keeps to the Mermaid because she likes to see young lively folk having fun around her (and by magic, keeps a close watch on their activities).

Although she is seen by the Lords of the city as a force for good (sometimes sending word to Piergeiron about illicit deals and doings that she overhears in the Mermaid), she is forced to maintain her unlife by draining the life forces of living, intelligent beings (two to three a year). She must do this by direct bodily contact, and usually chooses to so use guests she dislikes or sees as evil. Their bones end up on the staircase.

Her family, the noble Moonstars of Waterdeep, knows all about her, but keeps quiet about it. In public, she ignores them and they ignore her, but privately she helps in the training of young Moonstars with magical talent and also provides safekeeping for certain treasures and incriminating items for the family. (For more details of Lady Moonstar, see the "Folk of Waterdeep" appendix at the end of this book.)





# The Copper Cup

Tavern, Inn, & Festhall

iii ood yy

The Copper Cup is one of the busiest and most famous places in Dock Ward, a must-see spot for many visitors. A large, roaring, many-leveled barn of a place, the Cup is a tavern, inn, and festhall, all in one. It opens off the Southyard, just inside the city's South Gate, and is easily reached by the High Road or the Way of the Dragon, and easily fled from down Smugglers' Run alleyway.44 Travelers overwhelmed by the size and bustle of the City of Splendors can easily find the Cup, get much Waterdeep offers without ever leaving it, and boast when they get home of having stayed at one of the wildest places in the notorious Dock Ward!

# The Place

The Cup goes several cellars deep as well as four—in some places five—floors up. It is actually three linked old, converted warehouses built tall and massive of dressed stone with outside catwalks and back alley ladders.

The cellars are prone to flooding, and reek of mildew. Except for dumping carrion and garbage, they are little used. All of the floors above, though, are used the day and night round—so

much that the old floorboards often shake from all the bustling.

# The Prospect

As an inn, the Cup is pretty poor. A patrons stay is ruled by constant noise. The Cup is always busy with festhall traffic in the halls and vacant rooms at all hours. It's a lousy place to try to get some sleep.

The Cup is rescued by its services. Everything is available for a price, from having boots mended to mating riding stallions. If the staff people personally don't provide it, they have standing arrangements with someone who will.

As a tavern, the Cup has an ever-changing clientele, and no quiet places for intimate talk, haggling, or involved planning unless you rent a room. It does have cheap, plentiful, and fairly bad (watered down) ale, as well as good (but expensive!) wine, sold by the bottle.

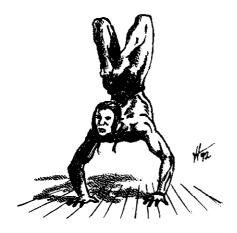
As a festhall, the Cup is one long, ongoing party. It's not a place to visit and remain unseen or to relax and stretch—its where one goes to romp. The dancers are acrobatic and expert contortionists. Their common costume is little more than a sheen of sweat!

# The Provender

Most food at the Cup is order in. It is brought up to your room

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> On the color city map, the Copper Cup is #232.





from other places in the city at their prices plus 1 cp per dish for the runners of the Cup to bring it to you, hot, through the streets.

Ale costs 1 cp/tankard. Dark ale (the good stuff) is double that. Wine goes for 2 sp to 3 gp/bottle, depending on quality and scarcity Good vintages are about 1 gp/bottle.

The Cup's kitchens are famous for two things: hot fish chowder, that tastes mainly of pepper and old beer (2 sp for a large wooden bowl), and cinnamon butter toast (1 cp/plate of six hot, dripping slices). The cinnamon butter toast is much favored by everyone who samples it for after the fest light dining.

The company of the Cup's beauteous and well-trained companions (of either gender) costs 10 gp per evening or any part of it. These escorts know the City well, can play most games

ably and know how to have a good time.

# The People

Few know that the Cup is owned and run by six of its dancers: Vivaelia Sunder, Evethe Untusk, Yululee Lantannar, and Jhandril Neth (the females), and Ilintar Belereth and Tiirlon Windstar (the males).

They take turns dancing, renting out as escorts, and tending bar with their large staff, and seem to love the life they've built.

# The Prices

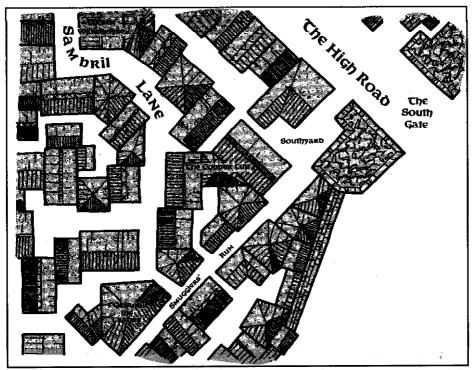
Rooms can be had for 1 gp to 7 gp per night (larger rooms and lower floors are dearer) or 10 gp to 40 gp per tenday. Most are 2 gp per night or 15 gp per tenday.

Linen is changed daily and the fee buys a single scented-water bath per night, if one desires, unlimited drinking water, and stabling for one or two animals in a covered and constantly attended stable. Additional beasts are 1 gp/night each.

# Travelers' Lore

Every visitor to this ongoing party has their own favorite tale of goings-on at the Cup, whether it's leaping from table to table or wilder pursuits, but this place has no hidden plots or deeds (or does it? I did see a lot of folk slipping down towards the cellars . . .).





# Other Places of Interest in Dock Ward

# Shops

Red Sails Warehouse

This warehouse offers rental space to all, no questions asked. Material to be stored can't be alive or flammable. Space is 1 cp/day per longbox. The longboxes are more or less coffin sized.

Empty cubicles of up to two longboxes deep and eight high are available—multiply the fee accordingly. If cooling is needed, ice and watching costs an extra 2 cp/day per longbox.

*Proprietor:* The proprietor, Orblaer Thrommox, is fat, bearded, and very strong.<sup>45</sup>

# Gelfuril the Trader



Gelfuril, who runs this crammed shop, will sell or trade just about anything. He deals in barter (but does *not* run a pawnshop) as well

 $<sup>^{45}</sup>$ Location #265 on the color city map. Used by a known fence, One-Eyed Jukk (see Chapter 4 of Waterdeep and the North).



as coinage. Much of his wares are old or heavily used, but his prices are very reasonable. Gelfuril is more than he appears. As locals will tell, he once felled a fleeing thief with a flame strike.46

Proprietor: Gelfuril the Trader, the proprietor, is a soft-spoken,

stout little man.

# The Rouse of Pride

This well-stocked perfume shop carries exotic scents from all over Faerun – from ashes of burnt snowsnake to the musk of the female giant slug. The shop is run by two sisters and is guarded by trained hunting dogs of compact build and extremely loyal temperament.

The House of Pride is crammed with a forest of glass bottles of all sizes, shapes, and hues. It is protected by a special enchantment that prevents glass from breaking. The glass here can still be vaporized or melted, but will not shatter or fall apart. 47

*Proprietresses:* The two sisters who run the House of Pride, Arleeth and Ilitel Harmeth, have whimsical senses of humor. The two of them always model several of their wares on various locations on their bodies.

Aurora's Realms Shop Catalogue Counter

This is the Dock Ward outlet of the famous Faerun-wide all goods retail chain. Located in a nondescript tenement building next door (to the north across a narrow side alley) to the Purple Palace festhall, this shop fronts on Slut Street.

I was unable to learn just who the mage on staff at this shop was. The flint-eyed order clerk would not even volunteer her own name, and as she stood seven feet tall and was more than twice as wide as me, I did not press her for details. She is flanked at the counter by two burly men-at-arms at all times when the shop is open (dawn to dusk), but she overtops even them, and hardly seems to need the bodyguards.

# Taverns

#### The Blue Mermaid

A clean, well-appointed but worn place, frequented by safe folk. Good ale, bad wine, and an utterly safe, boring atmosphere.

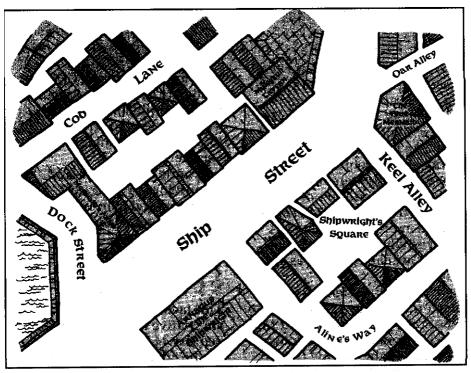
Proprietress: Mother Jalyth Hlommorath, a pleasant, wellmeaning, maternal sort, runs the Blue Mermaid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Location #231 on the color map. For a shop floor plan, see Map 6 of the City System boxed set. <sup>47</sup>Location #259 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Elminster reveals that the beefy order clerk is one Aglatha Shrey (her size is due to half-ogre blood), and the mage who teleports goods into the shop is one Beradyx Halfwinter, a fat and lazy lackspell (weak) wizard.

49Location #257 on the color map.





# The Friendly Flounder

This small, unassuming local tavern stands on the west side of Book Street, just across from the mouth of Candle Lane. It serves both good and bad beer, and patrons can get hot buttered blackbread and fried fish with their drinks.

Prices are 1 cp/tankard for flounder beer (the bad stuff, called teethrinse by everyone), 2 cp/tankard for best and bold ale, and 1 sp for all-one-patron-caneat of fish, with bread 1 cp/loat

extra. The food is hearty and not over spiced. The few bottles of wine in its cellar are far more pricey—but many Waterdhavians thrive on an affordable daily meal of fry at this drinking spot.

The Friendly Flounders unspectacular fare and modest structure keep it unknown to most visitors to Waterdeep, but it is a real find for no-bother eating.

Proprietor: Eaengul Skullcrown, who owns and runs the Friendly Flounder, is a gentle, balding giant of a man. He's reputed to have a natural talent for seeing the auras of magical items and enchantments.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Elminster has brought us blackbread. It's something like pumpernickel (molasses gives it the hue).



# The Hanged Man

!!! DODD

The Hanged Man is a gathering place for poets, scriveners, writers, calligraphers, and other literary folk, and is a good place to hear a tale. The patrons tend to smoke pipes, snore a lot, and to be hopelessly behind on everyday news. They also tend to be rude and opinionated, but not of the build or temperament to actually engage in physical disputes. A surprisingly good selection of wine is available, as well as all sorts of ales.

*Proprietor:* Auldenuth Orbrymm is the proprietor. Patrons who come up short on a bar tab are occasionally allowed to work it off by him by beating two of the regulars at a tall tales contest (if they lose, they do dishes).<sup>51</sup>

# The Sleeping Snake

This rowdy place is roughly furnished in hastily mended furniture. The dockhands who drink here spend a lot of time breaking it over each others' heads. There are rumors that a fence of stolen goods can be contacted here—if you can do any business amid the howls and hoots that ring out as human,

half-elven, and even half-orc wenches dance on the tables. (Some even try to sing!) There is a fine of 1 sp for hitting a dancer with any hurled object. Dancers willing to do more than dance negotiate other fees. The standing joke goes that any snake able to sleep through all this must be very, very dead.

*Proprietor:* Alard Belaerl, the proprietor, is a tall, gaunt, hatchet-nosed man with an annoying nasal voice.<sup>52</sup>

# The Sleeping Wench

This tavern is a quieter, cheaper alternative to the Sleeping Snake (see above). There's still dancing on the tables and the cheaper sort of drink, but this place has a better class of clientele and background music (of the lutes and toots variety).

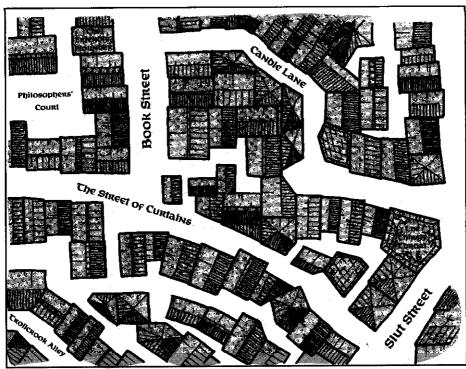
I still can't picture anyone sleeping in here unless he were deaf, but it's quiet enough that you can overhear conversations at nearby tables—usually talk of merchant feuds, city gossip, and the worsening state of the Realms in general.<sup>53</sup>

Proprietor: Peldan Thrael, who owns and runs the Sleeping Wench, is middle-aged, of middling height, nondescript, and

<sup>51</sup> Location #258 on the color map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup>Location #245 on the color map. The fence rumor is false, but allows a dockhand agent of the Red Sashes to observe a stream of folk engaged in shady business. See page 35 of *Waterdeep and the North.*<sup>53</sup> Location #261 on the color map.





mustachioed. Overall, the type who blends well into crowds.

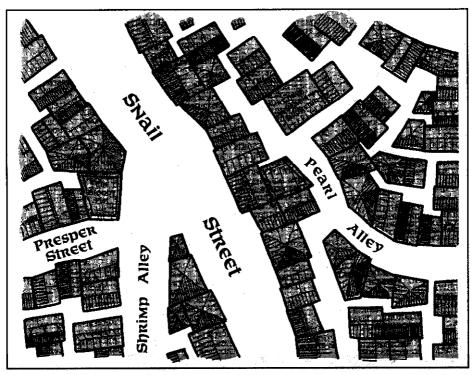
# The Thirsty Throat

This tavern is as ramshackle an establishment as its name implies. A merchant described it to me as "a pile of wood taking its own lazy time about falling into the street," and he got it right. All the furniture is crowded together and bolted down.

"Crowded, dark, and smells of stale beer," I wrote, years ago, on my first visit—and it hasn't changed a bit. What it does have to offer is mediocre beer at low prices. A tankard as big as a man's head costs 1 copper piece. Those who like to laugh and brawl tend to go elsewhere. This place is full of quiet men drinking themselves into slumber with a handful of coppers.

The washrooms are interesting. You climb down a ladder into a little antechamber opening right into a harborbound sewer channel. Men climb down one ladder, and ladies down another—and end up facing each other in the same room, about an arm's stretch apart. It's an ideal place for exchanging items on the sly, dumping incriminating things into the sewer, or even for





easily getting into Waterdeep's sewer network.<sup>54</sup>

Proprietor: Bulaedo "Fists" Ledgileer, a monstrously fat, toadlike man with forearms as big as the larger hams you'll see for sale down the street, runs the Thirsty Throat. His nickname comes from his habit of knocking men cold with one punch.

#### The Bloody Fist

5 5

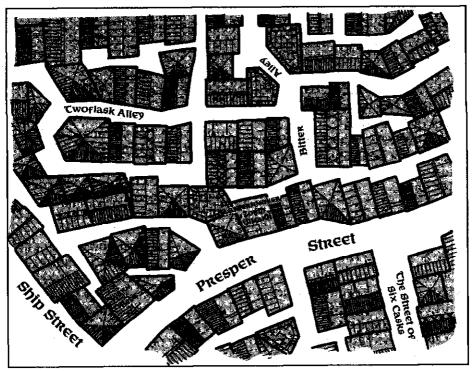


I suppose this notorious dive is a good example of just how bad a tavern can possibly be. Repeated furniture breakage has resulted in only wall benches and a standup elbow bar in the center of the room being left. Wooden mugs have replaced metal, ceramic, and glass vessels, and the beer barrels are chained down to prevent their easy use as missiles.

Drinkers stand herded together like rothe in a pen, snarling and belching, and fights are almost constant. Bullies and angry people come here to pick fights, and a room upstairs is retained for a succession of novice priests of Tempus, who dress broken bones and perform minor healing magics in return

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>Location #274 on the color map.





for donations to the war god.

One local bard, Talashamber of the Flame Tabard, even dubbed this place the Watching Wargod in a sarcastic ditty about the twofisted heroes of Waterdeep, and the nickname has passed into general usage, as in: "Let's drain a few at the Wargod." Men down on their luck can be hired here, but there is little else of interest.<sup>55</sup>

Proprietor: Uglukh Vorl is a half-orc who has been known to yawn in the midst of a full-scale swordfight. He defends himself with a sleep-poisoned, double-bladed battle axe whose central shaft ends in a spear blade.

# lnns

# Warm Beds

i by

This establishment delivers just what it promises—and little more. Each bed is warmed by three heated stones placed in it before the renter retires. There is hot water available for washing, heated by the bucket beside the same giant hearth that warms the bedstones. Rooms with one to four single beds are available.

This inn has no stabling (most patrons sell their mounts or stable them at a caravan stable in

<sup>55</sup> Location #272 on the color map.



South Ward), and provides no food of any kind. Quiet is expected after dark, but as long as there's no noise above lowpitched voices, renters can use their rooms for whatever purpose they please (such as conferences or meetings)?

Proprietress: Shalath Lythryn runs Warm Beds. She is kindly, plain, middle-aged, and very, very

observant.

# The Blackstar Inn

This dignified, even haughty inn is like a fortress on the outside, with barred windows, stone walls, and a slate roof. Its lobby has two armed guards, and the four hostlers in the locked stables are also armed.

Fees are high (typically 1 gp per head per night, plus 1 sp per animal stabled), but in return, guests get almost soundproof rooms (a rarity). Each room has a hip-bath, a double bed, water and wine provided for drinking and various pamphlets and chapbooks provided for light reading. Each room also has its own fireplace, albeit with a miserly supply of firewood, and the patrons tend to keep to themselves. A good place to get a long sound sleep.<sup>57</sup>

*Proprietress:* Asiyra Boldwinter is the proprietress of this

inn. Her manner is one of uppercrust, noble dignity.

# The Splintered Stair

iii bb

The entry hall of this room rises up three floors, overlooked by interior balconies linked by elegantly spiraling stairs. Its name comes from a memorable fight between adventurers, 20 winters ago, in which the fury of wielded blades left one stair damaged almost beyond repair. I love the opulent entry hall, but . . .

The stair has been replaced, but little else has been done to make guests welcome. The large, luxurious rooms are cold and dark, and chamber pots provide the only sanitary facilities. Rates are 1 gp/night for a person and mount or 5 sp/night for a person only. Extra animals, and extra persons sharing the same room, are 4 sp each. 58

Proprietress: Shalanna Duthmere is a pale, worn-looking lady from Daggerford who directs her six daughters in running the inn. She is a widow and is very tight with money.

# The Rearing Hippocampus

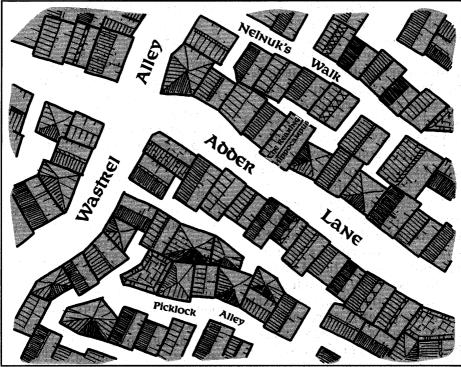
!!!! BBB

This is probably the classiest inn in Dock Ward, and is favored by

Location #270 on the color map.
 Location #276 on the color map.

Location #276 on the color map. 58 Location #277 on the color map.





many caravan masters and by merchants who want a good, secure place to sleep without announcing their arrival to observant eyes in better wards.

Adorned with a life-sized carved wooden hippocampus out front, this inn offers broth and toast at all hours, private rooms with canopied beds (warmer than most accommodations in Dock Ward, especially in winter) and carpeted floors. It is favored by many regular visitors to the city who have business near the harbor. It recently became a dangerous tavern known as the

Hidden Blade for a short time, but has reverted to its former owner and favored reputation.<sup>59</sup>

*Proprietor:* Barl Shardrin, the proprietor, is a quiet, attentive, polite man.

# FesThalls

The Mermaid's Arms Inn, Tavern & Festhall

iii ooo yy

This large, fairly new establishment is adorned with rich seablue draperies and takes the form of a series of elegant dining

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Location #278 on the color map. Its brief career as the Hidden Blade is mentioned in the Harpers novel *Elfshadow*, by Elaine Cunningham.



lounges, in which one dines or just drinks with an attractive host or hostess (or alone). One can take rooms for the night alone, or with someone else. Increasingly, the Arms (having acquired a safe reputation) is being used by single gentlefolk on the prowl for a night of love. In other words, patrons are going there to meet each other, not to hire a host or hostess for the night.

The Arms is large, well-lit, always busy, and can be quite expensive for the works (stabling, a room, meals, drinks, and companionship are all billed separately). Its nature makes it ideal for visitors intending to use it for some purposes. A merchant could take a room there, meet a business colleague there and eat dinner (perhaps with attractive house escorts), then go elsewhere for drinks and a play or show. The merchant could then stagger home late, knowing a comfortable room awaits.

This is an interesting trend. The only thing I regret about the Arms is that I'm far too apt to meet friends or business partners in its lounges when I want to slip up to my room unseen—or slip out unobserved.<sup>60</sup>

Proprietress: The Arms is run by Calathia Frost, a handsome and winning lady with a gorgeous, throaty voice. She keeps to herself and does her job.

# The Purple Palace

This is the closest thing Waterdeep has to a Calishite silks-boudoir. Its lavender silk draperies and gauzy hangings are heavily perfumed. Everything is cushions, soft carpets, music, and purple-tinted, spiced wine.

Companionship is expensive and (reputedly) very good. Some of the most famous are Naneethil of the Sword Tattoo and Dessra of the Dark Desires.<sup>61</sup>

Proprietress: The proprietress, Tathla "Flamehair" Nightstar, was famous as a courtesan in Calimport 30 years ago, and is still a great beauty. Her blood-red hair surrounds her like a cloak, and is so long that it trails behind her on the ground!

# Alleys

Dock Ward boasts the most colorful and dangerous alleyways and courtyards in the City of Splendors. Tourists are advised to be very sure of their personal defenses before walking any of these by night, even if not alone.

#### Arun's Alley



Running east off Ward's Way between Lackpurse Lane land Belnimbra's Street, this wide

 $<sup>^{60}</sup>$ Location #264 on the color map. Location #260 on the color map.



carters' way services many warehouses and businesses along its short length. It can be a fascinating place to watch skilled loaders and unloaders, who can throw and catch heavy barrels and crates with speed and accuracy.

Except for those who look threatening and have weapons at the ready this is as safe as an alley gets. Private guards belonging to the businesses and to the Fellowship of Carters and Coachmen guild are everywhere, vigilant and armed with crossbows, clubs, and short swords.

# Black Wagon Alley

Running east off Book Street to the north of Candle Lane, this narrow way leads to a warren of houses of the poor, including some thieves. City watch patrols are often busy cutting away tripwires and stranglewires from its more easterly stretches. It is named for the ghostly apparition of a black plague wagon that is sometimes seen slowly and silently moving up the alley, without horses or a driver!

# Black Well Court

Opening west off Book Street, across from the end of Drakiir Street, this cramped courtyard is known for its long-polluted well (the water *is* black!) and as the

meeting place of many gangs of street ruffians, thugs, and cultists over the years. As such, it is regularly patrolled by the city guard and the watch—but they of ten encounter thugs, Dragon Cultists, or worshippers of Loviatar "ministering" to some poor victim kidnapped from somewhere nearby.

There are also rumors of something living under the black water in the well that comes out at night to snatch and feed on passersby.

#### Candle Lane

III

Sometimes called Candle Alley, this winding way links Book Street and the Way of the Dragon. Its name comes from its extreme gloominess (it's overhung by tall houses), which made bookish sorts lit targets for thieves. It is now heavily patrolled. The Thirsty Throat tavern stands at its eastern end.

# Caedermon's Walk

BB

Linking Shipmasters' Hall with Wharf Street, this route is named for the ghostly ship captain who often walks up it, wooden clogs echoing in the mist, leaving wet footprints in his wake.

Caerdermon was drowned in the harbor by his mate, and rose as a revenant to follow his killer



to Shipmasters' Hall. A fearful wizard there blasted him to dust before he could slay the mate—and ever since, Caerdermon's phantom has walked this alley. There are whispers that the sea captains ghost can slay or harm those who block his path.

By day, this route is busy with carts serving the businesses all around. It is one of the alleys dominated by muscular men moving heavy barrels with oneman push-dollies.

# Fishnet Alley

Linking Spice Street and Dock Street in a dogleg west of Wharf Street, this narrow crowded alley gets its name from the drying nets that are hung across it at various levels from wall hooks by night or for repair by day.

Down the years, these nets have broken the fall of many thieves and lovers leaping from windows, or have been dropped from above by thugs to entrap people passing along the alley. Although it looks like the webchoked lair of some giant spider, this alley is usually quite safe. However. . .

# Manysteps Alley

Running parallel to and between Slut Street and the Way of the Dragon, this long, winding back way is home to many soothsayers, shady moneylenders, message runners, and fix-it-for-you thug bands. Avoid it if well-dressed or carrying obvious wealth. Thieves are never far off.

#### Melinter's Court

Behind (east of) the Hanged Man tavern, this dark courtyard is of ten full of pipe smoke, as philosophers spill out of the tavern, tankards in hand, to continue debates begun inside. Named for the evil mage who, a decade or so ago, formed a gang of thieves that met here to plan their villainy, this courtyard continues to be used from time to time by the evil mages who

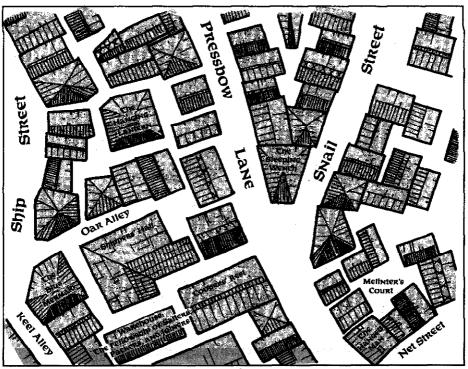
were once Melinter's apprentices.

Melinter is dead, but at times mages arrive at night, sleep any patrons in the courtyard, and meet to plan dark deeds. I couldn't find anyone willing to tell me very much about these wizards, but I did hear the names Azibar of the Seven Skulls, Felibarr Blacklance, and Onshall Goldcloak mentioned.

# Philosopher's Court

Better known to locals by its derisive name, the Foolsquare, this sunny court has always been where old men, drunkards, young thinkers, and the more





daring of the city's wealthy intellectuals have gathered when the weather is good to argue, flapping their jaws on a raised dais and weathered chairs. Drunks sleep under both the dais and the chairs by night.

Certain nameless nobles pay for torches and a standing city watch patrol to keep proceedings from being interrupted by thieves, ruffians, critics, or nightfall. Some whisper that Piergeiron or Khelben Arunsun or Mirt pay for the arrangements, but many nobles have been heard to say that "an afternoon stroll to hear the fools is better mirth than most shows thrice the price."

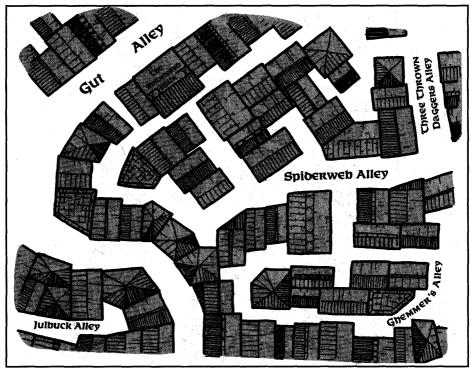
# Round Again Alley



Paralleling Wastrel Alley on the west, from north of Adder Lane to Belnimbra's Street, this narrow alley doubles back on itself (hence its name), and is the favored testing ground of someone who can create magical illusions of beholders.

Many Waterdhavians have seen silent, menacing eye tyrants gliding along the alley eyestalks writhing—only to fade away at the touch of hurled objects, or upon reaching the end of the way. What this means, and if it is dangerous, is not yet known.





# Thelten's Alley

Running northwest off Watchrun Alley, across from the end of Drawn Sword Alley this short way is named for the crazed wizard who dwelt here. Through some arcane magic, he survives as a wizshade, <sup>62</sup> and can still be encountered here or in Thelten's Court, which opens off this alley to the north.

This sometimes-seen magical apparition may whimsically ignore or aid folk, but more often attacks. The Watchful Orders

best efforts have not yet succeeded in destroying Thelten's strange remnants.

# Three Thrown Daggers Alley

IIII

Linking Blackstar Lane and Spiderweb Alley this winding way is famous for the curse cast here by the mage Arundoom. Struck in the back by three daggers hurled by a treacherous apprentice, he survived to take revenge. Once for each of his eight years of apprenticeship, the apprentice was driven by magi-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>Detailed in Volume 7 of the Monstrous Compendium (the first SPELLJAMMER® Appendix).



cal fear to flee up the alley and there face three animated daggers that swooped out of thin air at random points up and down the alley.

The spell survives, despite the efforts of later wizards to eradicate it. Because of this, anyone using the alley must beware three random attacks.<sup>63</sup>

Thugs sometimes lure or chase intended victims into the alley to get them injured. This route is sometimes called just Thrown Dagger Alley.

# Trollcrook Alley

Linking Snail Street and Slut Street, this relatively open, safe passage is today much used by carters—rushing wagons are its chief danger. Of old, it was frequented at night by a vicious gang of trolls dwelling in the city's sewers. They slew many citizens before being hunted down. Some sages misname this alley Troll *crush* Alley.

Twoflask Alley

Running due west from the midpoint of Bitter Alley, this way turns south and then loops back

north across itself to reach the broad way of Fish Street. The back way into the Thirsty Sailor, this still-dangerous passage is a haunt of thieves, thugs, and ladies of the evening who defend themselves or fell would-be customers with sleep-poisoned rings or long nailsheaths. Its name comes from an old joke about needing to drink two flasks of wine to have the courage to walk down it.

# Watchrun Alley

BBB

This northeast/southwest route links Nelnuk's Walk with Redcloak Lane and Gut Alley and gets its name from its frequent use by the city watch and the city guard to hurry across this part of Dock Ward. Being in the path of a running (or mounted, and charging!) patrol is itself a danger—and carters at times race each other along this route.

Thieves and cruel pranksters have been known to stretch tripwires and stranglewires across this alley by night. It is common knowledge in the ward that major gangs in this area have hired eyes watching this route to keep track of the city guard and the city watch.

<sup>64</sup> Persistent rumors tell of crossbows waiting behind sliding wall panels along this route-large tripod-mounted weapons firing spear-sized quarrels (one per 3 rounds, range: S5, M10, L15 damage: 2d6 vs. S- or M-sized target, 1d8 vs. L-sized target).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Make three Dexterity checks. Success means a gleaming dagger flashes out of nowhere, passing close by, and vanishes again. Failure means it strikes the victim, hilt-deep, for a chilling 4 hp of damage, and then fades away.



# Appendix 1: Folk of Waterdeep



s has been said before, the people of Waterdeep are Waterdeep. No guide to the city is complete without a mention of the more

colorful and influential folk who live there and shape Waterdeep into what the city is.

With Elminster's help, we've included a "best guesses" list here of the probable classes, levels, and alignments of some of the Waterdhavians Volo mentions. Adventurers be warned: Much of what is said here may be wrong!

This list is alphabetical by first name (or only known alias) because so many citizens of Waterdeep lack surnames. Only ability scores of 16 or greater are listed, and the standard Realms character statistic abbreviations are used.

AGLATHA SHREY (LN half-ogre female F5; ST 18/74). Aglatha is an order clerk for the Aurora's Shop in Dock Ward, and enjoys participating in tavern brawls-her specialty is throwing men bodily through doors, windows, or tables.

ALARD BELAERL (NE hm F3/T4). A tall, gaunt, hatchet-nosed man with a nasal voice, Alard uses his dancers as spies, selling information about rich visitors to thieves.

LADY ALATHENE MOONSTAR (CG hf W19; an archlich—detailed in SJR1 Lost Ships - whose unlife enchantments are flawed). Lady Alathene can turn her undead attacks and powers on and off at will, can't be turned, can use all magic and learn new spells, and maintains her unlife by slaving two to three living, sentient beings a year through energy drain spells. She has few friends and always seeks someone she can trust.

ALBAERON HALEMBIC (LN hm F3). Although Albaeron is grizzled and elderly, he is a skilled helmsman and navigator.

ALDAEGUTH. See Winestab.

ALEENA PALADINSTAR (LG hf W9; DEX 16, INT 18, WIS 16, CHA 16) Aleena is the daughter of Piergeiron, and secretly apprenticed to Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. She dwells in the palace. She is grave, reclusive, and



Aleena Paladinstar



tall—enough so that she once wore her father's armor and deceived people into thinking him present by aping his stride and movements.

ALLET TZUNTZIN (CG half-elf f W9; DEX 18, IN 18, CHA 17). Allet is a half-owner of the Misty Beard tavern in North Ward. She is slim, lithe, and dark-eyed, and has many suitors. Her will of steel is hidden under soft speech. She is firmly loyal to her sister, Vindara. She plans to marry into a noble house or found her own clan of magic-wielding half-elves, someday Allet owns and wields many wands (see Misty Beard footnotes for a partial selection).

AMARATHA RUENDARR (NG hf F4; ST 16, INT 16, WIS 16, CHA 16). Amaratha is the charming and beautiful proprietress of the Jade Jug inn in Castle Ward. An adventuress who retired when a lich's curse destroyed her right arm (her swordarm) and prevented any known magic, thus far, from regenerating it, she has put her money into running Waterdeep's most luxurious inn. Amaratha runs the Jade Jug as the sort of place she'd like to stay in—and does, as a guest, when it's not full. She has a perfect memory and makes a point of learning the names and details that guests want to give her, so that she can take an interest in their doings and make them feel important on their next visit. This ability has made her very useful to the city watch on many occasions. Although her profit margin is small, she grows steadily wealthier, as word of mouth makes the Jug a more popular place, despite its prices, year after year. The Jade Jug is already the place for visiting nobility to stay, or for Waterdhavian



Amasanna Vumendir

nobles to stay while their villas are being rebuilt, repaired, or simply cleaned up after a particularly successful party.

AMASANNA VUMENDIR (NG hf F0 DEX 18, INT 18, WIS 17). Amasanna is the proprietress of Dacer's Inn in Sea Ward. She was born to slave parents from Chult, who escaped from Calishite slavery. This is why she has dusky skin and a hatred of Calishites and slavers. She is agile and energetic, speaks seldom, but sees and knows all. She uses hand gestures with her well-trained staff, who love her and are utterly loyal to her.

ANSILVER THE LOCKSMITH (LG hm P5 of Gond; DEX 18, INT 18, WIS 17). Ansilver keeps his status as a priest of Gond secret even from other clergy of Gond. He is the proprietor of the Golden Key shop in Castle Ward. Although elderly Ansilver remains alert. He wears thick spectacles, and has a sharp-beaked nose and a habit of always humming to himself. Ansilver is a wealthy



landowner, and has many holdings in South Ward and in the farmland east of Waterdeep.

ARATHKA "RELLA" RUELL (CG hf P14 of Selune; DEX 16, INT 16, WIS 18). Arathka Ruell is the wife of Dandalus Ruell, co-owner of The Old Xoblob Shop. She worships from her rooftop bower and is the secret hand of the lady in Waterdeep (as opposed to the well-known priestesses of the House of the Moon). She sponsors and aids many adventurers, and has acted as den mother to such famous bands as the Company of the Caltrop and the Flamehurling Five.

**ARLEETH HARMETH** (NG hf F1; DEX 17, CHA 17).

ARNAGUS THE SHIPWRIGHT (LG hm F7; ST 17, DEX 16, CON 17, INT 17, WIS 17, CHA 16). The wealthiest, and probably the most skilled, shipbuilder in Waterdeep, Arnagus is a very influential member of not only his guild but of trade matters throughout the city. He is friendly to all, but says little, and keeps out of the public eye as much as possible. His sharp gaze misses little, and he has been known to report thieves, smugglers, murderers, and the like to the city watch. (For shipbuilding fees and times, see Waterdeep and the North.)

ASIYRA BOLDWINTER (LE hf P3 of Loviatar). Asiyra eyes all guests for possible converts/targets/fellow devotees, but otherwise keeps her faith secret (though some have heard her whip in the cellars, late at night). Her outward manner is one of upper-crust, noble dignity but like many devotees of the Mistress of Pain, she wears a blood-burrs belt under her gowns that sometimes betrays her devotion.

AULDENUTH ORBRYMM (NG hm F5 [retired]) Auldemuth is a master forger, but is retired.

AZIBAR OF THE SEVEN SKULLS (NE hm W9) Azibar is known for the enchanted flying skulls that are always with him, darting and hovering—and spitting spells at his foes.

BALAGHAST BRIGHTLINGAR (NG hm F8; ST 17, WIS 16, CON 16). The proprietor of the Pilgrims' Rest inn in Sea Ward, Balaghast is a gruff, hardworking retired mercenary. His manner conceals kindness and willingness to help those in need.

BALARG "TWOFISTS" DATHEN (CN hm F5; ST 17, DEX 16, CON 16). Twofists, the proprietor of the Red-Eyed Owl tavern in Castle Ward, is prone to brawling and wenching with equal vigor and noise. He is bluff and bristle-bearded, with long, unkempt red hair. His rough voice is often heard calling out coarse jests to tavern patrons, and his arm has a deadly aim with hurled platters or tankards. He is always willing to pitch in to a fight.

BALTHORR "THE BOLD" OLASKOS (NE hm T8; ST 16, DEX 17, WIS 16, CHA 16). Balthorr is the loud-voiced and friendly proprietor of Balthorr's Rare and Wonderful Treasures in Castle Ward. His "hail-fellow wellmet," sincere attitudes are belied by the fact that he secretly fences stolen goods and is sympathetic to the Shadow Thieves (the outlawed Thieves' Guild).

BARL SHARDRIN (CN hm F3). Barl is a quiet, attentive, polite man who can reveal much about Waterdeep to anyone who bothers to sit and talk with him.



BELIARGE "OLD BOAR" MADUSKAR (LN hm F8; ST 17, CON 16) Beliarge, known as "Bel" to his friends, is the proprietor of the Swords' Rest tavern. This wary old warrior is grizzled and stout, but still capable.

BERADYX HALFWINTER (LN hm W9) A fat and lazy wizard who enjoys good wine, ale, and cheese, Beradyx pursues "spellhurling for hire" in the safe confines of a city. He hires out for only noncombat and legal situations. His spells are few and his Art weak, earning him the contempt of mages like Elminster. He works as the transportation mage for Aurora's Shop in Dock Ward.

BLAZIDON "ONE-EYE" (CN hm F6 [now]; ST 16). This veteran warrior comes out of retirement from time to time, but spends most of his days uniting—for a small fee—hireswords with caravan masters and others wishing to hire them. By day he's usually to be found sitting on a stool in Virgin's Square, where the fighting men have learned to gather. By night, he's busy in one of the private rooms of the Bowels of the Earth tavern in Trades Ward - which he owns, although few in the city know that-or making the rounds of other taverns and inns, looking for warriors who need work. One-Eye is grizzled, hairy and stout with thickly muscled forearms that brand him as a fighter from far off. He always wears a ring of the ram and a vampiric regeneration ring and carries at least one potion of super*heroism* and one of *extra-healing*.

BRATHAN ZILMER (LGhmF5;ST16, INT 16, WIS 16, CHA 16). Brathan, Guildmaster of the Fellowship of Innkeepers and proprietor of the

Pampered Traveler inn in Castle Ward, is solemn, wary, and darkly handsome. Brathan is the last survivor of an adventuring band slaughtered by a mage it attacked in a northern ruin. The mage, a horned man in purple robes who called himself Zulorr Thaeran, swore he'd slay every last one of them slowly and painfully (though that was two decades ago). Brathan is always alert for some sign that the mage has found him at last and is coming to torment and slay him.

BRAUM PELAUVIR (LG hm F6; ST 17, DEX 16). Braum is proprietor of Pelauvir's Counter store in South Ward. Braum, who is tall, beefy and jovial, has a memory decades-long and sharp with detail. He has largely retired from battle.

BRAZAUN OF BALDUR'S GATE(CN hm F0; DEX 18, INT 18, CHA 16) Brazaun, a feast cook for hire of brilliant skill, is noted for his savory pastries and wine-flavored ices. His lowest fee is 100 gp/night, payable in advanceplus, of course, the cost of the ingredients he requires. These ingredients typically cost about 10 gp/guest, and must be laid in by his client, not by the quick-tempered, dashingly handsome Brazaun himself. Brazaun is given to dancing and singing as he works in the kitchen. He's a ladychaser and tippler of legendary capacity.

BULAEDO"FISTS"LEDGILEER (NE hm F5; ST 18/12, CON 18; 70 hp—the maximum number possible). During Bulaedo's career as a warrior, he was poisoned many times, so is 40% likely to be immune to any poison used on him.



CALATHIA FROST (CG hf F9; DEX 16, CHA 17). The Mermaid's Arms is run by Calathia Frost, a handsome and winning lady with a gorgeous, throaty voice. She usually keeps to herself and does her job, but will not condone any activities that she considers evil going on in the inn. She keeps her favorite long sword (a long sword +2) and a suit of chain mail in a cedar chest at the foot of her bed, underneath some blankets.

CALLANTER ROLLINGSHOULDER (NE hm F1; ST 16, CON 17). Callanter is the proprietor of the Sleepy Sylph tavern in Castle Ward. He is tall, fat, and dresses in Calishite silken finery, with gold bells on the ends of his *huge* mustache.

CATHAL SUNSPEAR (LN hf F0; INT 17, WIS 16). This cultured, middle-aged counter clerk of the Castle Ward outlet of the Aurora's retail chain was born to a wealthy family of Tethyr. Cathal is now an investor deeply interested in the behind-thescenes deals of guilds and noble families.

CATHALISHAERA (CN hf W10; DEX 17, INT 18). Cathalishaera, the reclusive, shy owner of the Jade Dancer, loves to animate the famous dancing statue for which her establishment is named, but would never dare to dance in public herself. She is a onetime apprentice of Kappiyan Flurmastyr who once sought adventure but withdrew in terror from the dark magic of baatezu to a life of hiding and using her magic for small things. She secretly dreams of meeting a brave, loving, young wizard to protect her and to taste adventure with him again.

CHETH THANION (LN hm F4; ST 16, INT 16, WIS 16). Cheth, proprietor of the Wandering Wemic inn in Sea Ward, devotes his life to building his inn into a special place. He is big and burly with blond hair and broad shoulders. Although he conveys an easygoing nature, he is far more alert than he seems, and never forgets a face or any debts or cheating.

CHULDAN HELMSTAR (CNhmT4). Chuldan is a sly man of many secrets. He reminds some of a fox or a weasel.

DANDALUS "FIRE-EYE" RUELL (CG hm F14; ST 18/02, DEX 17, INT 16, WIS 17, CON 16, CHA 16). This fat, jolly balding bearded proprietor of the Old Xoblob Shop always has bulging pockets and always carries on his person the following magic: a ring of free action, a ring of spell turning, a greenstone amulet, 2 potions of extra-healing, an elixir of health, 2 iron bands of Bilarro spheres, and 6 beads of force. He may well carry more magic and definitely has an invisible broad sword +3 somewhere near at hand.

DARION SULMEST (LN hm F0; DEX 18, INT 17, WIS 17). While he is spokesman for the Order of Cobblers & Corvisers, Darion is also the proprietor of his own very expensive, but top-quality, shop in North Ward. Darion is sometimes sarcastic, extremely wealthy, and handsome. He is rumored to have several noble ladies as intimate companions and to hold the ear of the Lords of Waterdeep. Darion is secretly a wistful would-be adventurer who always likes to hear tales of danger. He sometimes sponsors adventuring bands.



**DAUNT BUIRUNE** (CN hm T13, ST 16, DEX 18, INT 16). Daunt Buirune is retired from thieving and is now the proprietor of the Red Gauntlet tavern. He is silent, watchful, and always pleasantly wary.

**DELBORGGAN THE BLADE (CG hm F9;** ST 17, WIS 17, CON 17). Delborggan is a grizzled, one-eyed ex-adventurer. Formerly he was a famous hero of northern exploration who led the men of Lith through many monsters and icy perils to reach isolated Snowkeep. He is a man driven to adventuring by grief (as he says, "For it is an ill thing—a heavy thing—for a boy to be not loved by his father"), who now views the world with buoyant, if cynical, good humor. As the proprietor of the Riven Shield Shop in Trades Ward, he's always armed with magic items, including (under his eyepatch) a waiting magical eyecusp that can spout beams of fire when he desires (details of this item left to the DM).

DESSRA OF THE DARK DESIRES (CN hf F2; DEX 16, CHA 16).

DHAUNRYL ZALIMBAR (NG hm W10; INT 18). Dhaunryl Zalimbar is the tall, kindly, gangling and rather shy service-mage of the Trades Ward outlet of the Aurora's retail chain. A studious sort with little taste for danger or adventure, Dhaunryl is a collector and student of heraldic devices. He sketches all badges, crests, and escutcheons he sees in Waterdeep, as well as noting down and memorizing most of the mottoes he encounters.

**DLARNA SUONE** (LN hf F2; ST 16, INT 17). Dlarna Suone is the chief guild buyer and seller for the Vintners' (et

al,) Guild. She resides at their headquarters, the House of Good Spirits. Sharp-tempered and sharp-witted, she is quick to size up a person and to smell deceit. Her hobbies are breeding cats and racing horses. (She likes to be in the saddle.)

**DOBLIN GOUNAR** (CN hmT3; DEX 16, IN 16). Doblin, proprietor of Gounar's Tavern in Sea Ward, is a cold, self-important, cruel and arrogant man of cutting manners and an open lack of caring for others.

EAENGUL SKULLCROWN (NG hm F4; ST 17, CON 18). A gentle, balding giant of a man, Eaengul Skullcrown is descended from a now-fallen noble family of Amn. He is now the proprietor of the Friendly Flounder in Dock Ward. He's reputed to have a natural talent for seeing the auras of magical items and enchantments.

**EIRAKLON MARIMMATAR** (LNhmF9; ST 17, DEX 17). As housemaster (security chief) of the Gentle Mermaid in North Ward, Eiraklon oversees the daily running of the place, but is seldom seen by patrons. He suspects that shady money backs the Mermaid, but dares not try to investigate. His suspicions have arisen because there's so much money passing through the Mermaid, and its spending is never questioned by anyone. Eiraklon also has the constant feeling of being watched. Xanathar (the beholder crime lord of Waterdeep) wants an unwitting, respectable agent doing his best for the Mermaid, and so Eiraklon has a free hand in hiring and managing in order to make the Mermaid the best possible place of its kind. His efforts make the Mermaid



profitable in its own right and a means of attracting into the city wealthy folk who can then be fleeced.

ELGUTH IRAMBLIN (CG hm F1). Elguth is the stableboy at the House of Good Spirits, and an expert guide to the gambling houses and festhalls of Waterdeep. He is a member of the Vintners' (et al.) Guild.

EVETHE UNTUSK (CG half-elf f F4; DEX 18, CHA 17). Evethe is a dancer, bartender, escort, and part-owner of the Copper Cup. She is known for her love of music, especially elven songs and human ballads about elves.

**FELDYN GOADOLFYN** (NE hm T8; DEX 17, INT 17). Feldyn is the nondescriptlooking, cold strategist who is the owner of the Old Monster Shop. He has been described as a dangerous, patient enemy.

FELIBARR BLACKLANCE (CE hm W12). Felibarr Blacklance is the developer of the *blacklance* "blast beam" spell. He is a cruel killer.

FELSTAN SPINDRIVVER (CG hm F4; ST 16, INT 16). Felstan is the amiable keeper of the Cliffwatch Inn in North Ward. He is quick to helpadventurers and a great fund of free lore to lodgers on the talk of the city and adventuring deeds.

**FELZOUN THAR** (CN dwarf m F6; ST 17, WIS 17, CON 18). Felzoun is the proprietor of Felzoun's Folly tavern in Trades Ward. He is a loud-voiced, incredibly energetic host who is always bustling about. He fears no one and always carries two throwing axes under his apron. Felzoun is bristle-bearded and balding, with a

red face and red beard.

FILIARE (LN hm F5 [now]; ST 16, INT 16, CHA 16). Filiare, a jovial ex-mercenary, is the proprietor of the Inn of the Dripping Dagger in Trades Ward. He has been known to show kindness to adventurers and mercenaries down on their luck. He is also the father confessor to, and sometime intimate friend of, many unhappy noblewomen of Waterdeep.

LADY GALINDA RAVENTREE (CN hf F0; DEX 16, INT 16, CHA 16). This catty young noble is devoted to festive frivolity, fighting with her social rivals, and sampling as many young men as she can entice into her reach. Lady Galinda can briefly be seen at this work in the novel *Elfshadow*.

**GELFURIL THE TRADER** (CG hm P6 of Tymora). Gelfuril is a retired priest.

GORDRYM ZHAVALL (LNhmF4;ST16, DEX 16, WIS 16). Gordrym is a calm, expressionless man who is second guild buyer (after Dlarna Suone) for the Vintners' (et al.) Guild. He resides at their headquarters, The House of Good Spirits. He is secretly a gambler and heavily in debt. Gordrym is a known master blender of wines.

GOTHMORGAN ILIBULD (CGhmF2;INT 18). Gothmorgan is the proprietor of the Singing Sword tavern in Castle Ward. He is a likable former adventurer who retired when he found the sword (of the tavern's name) in a monster-haunted ruin. Gothmorgan is tall and polite. While he is always watchful, he is known primarily for his dry humor. His wealth increases daily.

**GULTH DJANCZO** (NE hm T7; DEX 17). Gulth is the proprietor of the Full



Cup tavern. A nasal-voiced, coldly polite weasel of a man, he probably has hidden magic items on his person for defense.

GUTHLAKH "HANDS" IMYUR (LN hmF7; ST 1B/00, CON 16). Guthlakh stands more than six-and-a-half feet tall, with corded muscles and a battered, sword-scarred face. He is the proprietor of the Sailors' Own, a dockside tavern in Castle Ward. His demeanor is slow and deliberate, and he seldom smiles.

HAHSTOZ BAERHULD (NE hm T6 [now]; DEX 18). Hahstoz is the crooked proprietor of the Golden Horn Gambling House in Trades Ward. A dark-haired and complexioned, habitually expressionless man, he moves with a silent grace.

HALA MYRT (NE hm F5; ST 16). Hala Myrt, a fat, resentful man, spends most of his days sitting on a barstool at the Grinning Lion tavern, as a contact for the fence Orlpar Husteem. He is a wary man and carries a capsule of dream sauce in his hair. If he bites it, he'll fall instantly into a slumber of wild, swirling dreams from which he can't be roused for ld6 days. During this time, even magical means won't arouse him or enable others to learn things by compelled questioning or mind-reading.

HALIDARA URINSHOON (LNhfF1;DEX 16, CHA 15). Halidara, who is the owner of the Three Pearls Nightclub, an exotic dancer and a shrewd investor, lives a life of luxury and party-going in the city's North Ward and partakes often and heavily of chocolates and amberjack sherry



Hilmer

HILMER (LN hm F9; ST 1B/00, DEX 18, INT 17, CON 16, CHA 16). Hilmer is a master armorer and proprietor of his own shop in Castle Ward. Although he is now retired, as an adventurer he was known to have explored Myth Drannor and much of Undermountain. He is tall with broad shoulders. He is known to be just, honest, and soft-spoken. He is a close friend of suspected Lords Durnan and Laeral.

HLONDAGLUS SHRIM (NGhmW9;INT 18, WIS 18). Hlondaglus is a short, shy ugly little man with misshapen features and one wooden leg. He is fiercely loyal to the Ruells (Arathka and Dandalus).

ILDAR ORSABBAS (CE hm F0). Ildar, the stout, fun-loving, slightly pompous proprietor of Orsabbas's Fine Imports in Trades Ward, is nicknamed the "Duke of Darkness" for the masked, sinister guise he wears to nobles' feasts. While he is wearing this costume, he loves to threaten,



dance, and seduce. He goes to such feasts partly to sample the tapestries, wines, and perfumes that he has been known to fence—a trade that has earned him his other nickname: Fingers.

ILINTAR BELERETH (CG half-elf m F6; ST 17, DEX 17, CHA 16). Ilintar is a dancer, escort, bartender, and partowner of the Copper Cup. He sees all but says little.

**ILITEL HARMETH** (CG hf F1; DEX 18, CHA 16).

ILMAIREN ARNSKULL (LN dwarf m F6; ST 17, CON 17). Ilmairen, a fat, darkeyed dwarf, acts as a contact with his friend Jaerloon for dwarves visiting Waterdeep. He works from the dining room of the Raging Lion inn in North Ward. He is a skilled whittler and mimic, and has often been known to sing as sweetly as any human soprano as he parodies a singer's performance.

IMMITHAR "THE GLOVE" (CN hm T6; DEX 17, INT 17, CHA 16). Immithar owns and runs the Blue Jack tavern in Castle Ward. He is a fast-moving and quick-witted fellow who is known as a joker, a good strategist, and a good judge of character and consequences. He is also an expert mimic. He retired from thieving, and now invests in shipping and rental rooms.

JAERLOON BUCKLEBAR (LG dwarf m F7; ST 16, DEX 16, CHA 16). Jaerloon, with his friend, Ilmairen, acts as a contact for dwarves in Waterdeep from a base in the dining room of the Raging Lion inn in North Ward. He is a white-bearded, weather-faced but kingly dwarf, who is a skilled



Jathaliira Thindrel

whittler and wrestler. Jaerloon is uncannily adept at striking missiles out of the air or catching them (consider his DEX to be 21 when dealing with missiles).

JATHALIIRA THINDREL (CN hf F0; DEX 18, INT 17, CHA 16). Jathaliira is the petite, pert, and always-bustling proprietress of the House of Purple Silks festhall in Sea Ward. She is sharp-tempered but passionate, middle-aged, and wealthy. She has built up a large fortune (almost a million gp in ready cash) by shrewd investments in Waterdhavian companies and by carefully purchasing valuable city real estate. (The real estate's value is close to another four million gp.) She has arrangements with the Watchful Order to rescue her in the case of kidnapping and ransom, when she calls them by means of a certain magical bell that she wears in her hair. Each use of the bell costs her 40,000 gp, but she's only had to use it twice. Each time she seized more than the fee from her would-be captor. Jathaliira can also



call on her bouncers and her friend, Khelben Arunsun, for support and protection.

"MOTHER" JALYTH HLOMMORATH (NG hf F1). Mother Hlommorath is fat, bustling, and gossipy. Any secret told to her is all over the city within the day.

JANESS IMRISTAR (CN hf F3; INT 16). Janess Imristar owns and runs the Spouting Fish tavern. She is a short, mousy loud-voiced woman who is always bustling. She is quite fearless.

JANNAXIL SERPENTIL (NE hm W14; INT 18). This cold, much-hated bookseller and fence is a coward born long ago in rural Amn who early on discovered how to make potions of longevity – and then killed the man he learned that lore from. He's gathered much magical lore over the years, and has summoned baatezu, trained and magically bound various guardian creatures, and collected the following magical items that he carries on his person or keeps near at hand in his office: a wand of paralyzation, a brooch of shielding, a bag of dust of tracelessness, a pair of eyes of minute seeing lenses, a pair of gauntlets of ogre power, a pair of gauntlets of swimming and climbing, a hat of disguise, several jars of ointment, a necklace of Keoghtom's adaptation, a periapt of proof against poison, and a collection of an unknown number of Quaal's feather tokens. Jannaxil also possesses an unknown number of spellbooks and other magical items, hidden in a cache somewhere underground in Waterdeep.

JHAMBROTE HARKHARDEST (LN hm W9).

JHANDRIL NETH(NGhf F2; DEX 17, CHA 14). Jandril is a dancer, escort, bartender, and part-owner of the Copper Cup. She is known for her frequent changes in her (rather impassioned) relationships with her intimate friends, which usually end in tempestuous fights in which many things get broken.

JHANT DAXER (LE hm T9; DEX 18, INT 17, CHA 16). Jhant, a wary, sharp-featured, fox-like, unpleasant and ruthless man, is officially owner of the Gentle Mermaid in North Ward. He is actually a front man for the beholder crime lord Xanathar Before becoming Xanathar's agent, Jhant was a caravan owner and moneylender operating out of Baldur's Gate, although it is not a well-known fact in Waterdeep. Jhant runs smuggling, money drop, kidnapping, and goods reallocation errands for Xanathar, and is seldom at the Mermaid.

**KAEROVEN "SIMILES" YULUTH** (NE hm F8).

KAPPIYAN FLURMASTYR (NG hm W11; INT 18, CHA 16). At over 90 years of age, Kappiyan is tall, thin, and distinguished. He is known as Waterdeep's potion wizard" and is the kindly tutor to a succession of female apprentices. A noted maker of potions and periapts, Kappiyan is also always researching the better spellcasting of low-level magics. He is moved to anger by the misuse of magic. He always wears robes, with a wand of paralyzation up one sleeve, a wand of magic missiles up the other (in forearm sheaths), and a wand of negation down one boot. At his belt he carries a plain, nonmagical dagger, a light purse, and at least three potions of healing.



**KATHLIIRA SALARTH** (CG hf T4; DEX 17, INT 18, CHA 16). Kathliira is a famous hire cook who goes to a client's kitchen and whips up the food for a feast with ingredients already laid in. Her sweets are legendary up and down the Sword Coast, but Elminster and Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun both agree her soups are her true masterpieces. They're the best they've ever had on any world! Kathliira's fee is always 200 gp/night. Often common folk join purses together to hire her for a house party, whereas most hire cooks only cater to the wealthy and noble.

KHALOU MAZESTAR (CG hf F3; ST 16, INT 16). Khalou is the fat, talkative, wise-cracking lady bartender of the Jade Dancer. She loves to talk to guests, and is known as a great source of jokes, information on current fads and interests among the young, and gossip about Waterdeep's rich and noble folk—especially envious talk of gems and extravagance.

KRIIOS HALAMBAR (LN hm F0; DEX 18, INT 18). Kriios, guildmaster of the Council of Musicians, Instrument-Makers, and Choristers, is a matchless lutemaker and a skilled harpmaker. He is the proprietor of Halambar Lutes & Harps in Castle Ward. Kriios is habitually expressionless and has unusual, large, blackpupiled eyes. He is a very wealthy snob and a severe critic of musicians. He holds himself as too exalted to arrange music for a noble's feast, but is a supplier of instruments to many musicians who must play at such feasts to make a living.



Loene

LEILATHA SUBRAIRA (CN hf T6; DEX 17, CHA 15). Leilatha is an escaped slave from Chult who gave her Calishite masters the slip in Water-deep long ago and killed them when they came looking for her. Her entire body is covered in tattoos. She keeps her skin oiled except when creeping around rooftops at night to go thieving.

LHAERHLIN MASRAM (LN hm F8; ST 16). Lhaerhlin is the affable but stone-faced proprietor of the Raging Lion inn in North Ward. A tall, stout man of many secrets, he always wears a ring of spell turning and a ring of lightning (equal to a wand of lightning).

LOENE (CG hf F9 [now]; ST16, DEX 17, CHA 16). Loene, a graceful, sensuous former pleasure girl, was rescued from slavery by the Company of Crazed Venturers. She won a place in their ranks, and later became a gambler, adventuress for hire, and the lady love of Mirt. Today she is a rich landlord in the city. She still



trains warriors and can be hired as an adventuress for 2 gp/day. She wears a ring of spell storing holding dispel magic, fly sending, and wall of force. She has large hazel eyes, a magnificent tawny body and dark blonde hair. She will use the sending to call on the [now 14th level] mage Nain Keenwhistler for aid when her life is in peril.

LOGROS HLANDARR (LN hm W9; DEX 16, INT 18 CHA 16). Logros is service-mage to the South Ward Aurora's outlet. Arrogant and given to acting important and mysterious, he desperately wants to be part of real intrigue—with a minimum of danger.

THE MASKED MINSTREL (CG hf B4; DEX 17, INT 16, CHA 17). None know the true name of this mysterious lady of the evening who frequents Jesters' Court in Castle Ward. She can be found there on warmer evenings, playing a harp, lyre, or lute. She has a pleasant singing voice, and always appears masked. She entertains clients nearby on the wooded slopes of Mount Waterdeep. Some say she's a Harper agent, others that she's demented or some sort of spy for a foreign realm. Her true origins, aims, and past remain obscure.

MHAIR SZELTUNE (NG hf W17; DEX 17, INT 18, CHA 16). Lady Master of the Order Mhair Szeltune is head of the Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors. A serene, efficient, petite lady of iron will, she is an uncommonly good judge of character. She is friend to Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, has long, glossy black hair, and very, very blue eyes. She usually carries a staff when in public—



Mhair Szeltune

reputed (correctly, Elminster says) to be a *staff of the magi*. Mhair often wanders the city in the magical guise of an old crone leaning on her stick (the staff) in order to see what treatment she'll get and what's going on when there's no one important to see. She has been known to teach adventurers who tease or torment the ugly old lady a sharp lesson. However, Mhair can be a kind, loyal friend.

MORATHIN "HOOKS" BELMONDER (LN hm F0; ST 17, DEX 17). Morathin is a burly hearty man skilled at butchery. He is an expert, strong-stomached judge of musculature, and the type, age, and condition of meat. (He can tell diseased meat with 88% accuracy and tainted/poisoned meat 94% of the time.) Morathin is Second Knife of, and public contact for, the Guild of Butchers. He makes over 400 gp clear profit on a typical business day and is considered a very rich man.

MRIL JUTHBUCK (CG half-elf f F4; INT 16, CHA 16). Mril is the counter clerk



at the South Ward Aurora's outlet. She loves drinks, jokes, and dancing, and is friendly to all.

MRORN "BLACKBRACERS" HALDUTH (LN hm F6; ST 17,DEX17,CON17). Mrorn's nickname comes from the bracers he never removes, which are black-hued *bracers of defense AC2*. He leads the seven bouncers at the House of Good Spirits, and is a calm, no-nonsense, untalkative man of quiet voice and iron strength.

MUNZRIM MARLPAR (LN lizard man m F6; ST 16, IN 16). Rare among his kind for his intellect and nine foot height, this dignified, fearless individual tends bar at the Misty Beard tavern in North Ward. Munzrim is sensitive and caring. He's a keen study of human life, and is great friends with a spectator named Thoim Zalamm. Human females have begun to interest him—and he has befriended not only his employers, but several regular patrons.

MYRMITH SPLENDON (LN hm F9 [now]; ST 18/04, WIS 16). This noted weapons tutor makes a good living training all who pay his fees in the expert use of weapons. Myrmith is always alert, and it is said he never sleeps and can see behind him. Myrmith, who is a very strong man, is an ex-adventurer and mercenary who accumulated quite a few magic items and gold pieces before settling down in Waterdeep. He also picked up many powerful wizards up and down the Sword Coast North as friends.

NANEETHIL OF THE SWORD TATTOO (NG hf T3; DEX 16, CHA 16). Naneethil is famous for the tattoo of a vertical

sword, hilt uppermost, that runs down her front from throat to crotch. It is not actually a tatoo, but a brand, forcibly bestowed on her by orc slavers intending to sell her to Thayan buyers. She escaped them years ago.

NARTHINDLAR OF THE NINE SPELLS (LN hm W12; INT 18, WIS 16, CON 16). Narthindlar is a wizard who loves magic concerned with growing things and has a fondness for lemons. He installed the lemon trees in Lemontree Alley and magically nurtures them. A shy retiring, rather paranoid fellow, he is known as Narthindlar of the Nine Spells because he worked with a priest of Silvanus to develop a special *contin*gency spell that triggers nine precast first level priest spells upon his person when he is brought to 4 hp or less or when he speaks a secret activation word. These spells are bless, cure light wounds, pass without trace, protection from evil, and sanctuary. He has used this spell twice - once when beset by raiding orcs in the wilds and once when attacked by brigands in an alley in Waterdeep—so most of the city folk have heard of it.

NLEERA TARANNATH (CG hf W10; DEX 18, INT 18, CHA 16). Nleera is a Harper mage who has recently begun to act as a contact for Those Who Harp by impersonating one of the Tesper family ghosts—with the aid of the ghosts themselves—during public parties at the Tespergates villa in Sea Ward. She is demure, cautious, and well armed with magic items and spells, including one that will summon the city guard at full speed should she need them.



**OLHIN SHALUT** (LN hm F4; ST 16, WIS 17). Olhin Shalut, a wealthy investor and retired adventurer, is the proprietor of the Ship's Wheel tavern in Sea Ward. He is old, affable, and pompous. He always wears or carries a *ring of blinking*, a *ring of protection* +3 a *rod of lordly might*, an *iron bands of Bilarro* sphere, and a *short sword of quickness* (+2). He also owns other magic items, which he will use when expecting trouble.

ONGAMAR TATHLOON (LN hm F9; ST 18/00, CON 17). Ongamar tends bar in the Bowels of the Earth tavern and is the friend and confidant of the owner, Blazidon One-Eye. He is eventempered, bald, and incredibly muscular He wears two gold earrings—an *earring of spell turning*, which functions as the magical ring of the same name, and an *earring of protection* +3 which also functions as the ring of the same name.

ONSHALL GOLDCLOAK (LE hm W11). Onshall works with tanar'ri. He is known for always working revenge on those who deal him even the slightest of setbacks.

ORBLAER THROMMOX (NE hm F6; ST 18/04). Orblaer is fat and wears a full beard.

ORGULA SAMSHROON (LG hf F0; INT 17, WIS 17). Orgula is the counter clerk of the Trades Ward outlet of the Aurora's Realms Shop catalogue retail chain. She is a stout, middleaged motherly sort, whose easy manner and encyclopedic knowledge of the Realms—and of Aurora's stock—have made her famous among patrons. She never forgets a face and has a perfect memory for details of dress and description. She serves as a



Örlpiir Hammerstar

Harper contact and one of many sets of eyes for Piergeiron.

**ORLOTH THELDARIN** (NG hm F0; DEX 17, INT 17, CHA 17). Orloth is the counter clerk for the Sea Ward outlet of the Aurora's retail chain. He is a man of effeminate manners (tempered with tact and courtesy) who has superb taste and the knack of recalling colors precisely even when seen only once and long ago.

ORLPAR HUSTEEM (CE hm T4; DEX 17, INT 17). Orlpar is the bored, thrillseeking, cunning younger brother of Orbos, head of the Husteem noble family. From his house on Golden Serpent Street, he operates as a fence, dealing largely in spices, scents, wines, and various potions, but occasionally in large and unique thefts. Unbeknownst to almost everyone in Waterdeep, Orlpar has connections to the beholder Xanathar, who has given him a small death tyrant (an undead beholder, missing several of its eyes) to defend his vaults, which have sewer tunnel



connections to areas used by Xanathar's organization. Orlpar probably also has a hired mage and magic items to defend himself with.

ORLPIIR HAMMERSTAR (LGhmF2). A onetime city guardsman, Orlpiir is now proprietor of the Grey Serpent inn in Trades Ward. Orlpiir is a man with dwarven blood in his remote past (hence the family name), but he himself is almost seven feet tall. He is thin and austere, with a cultured voice and a beaky nose. Orlpiir is very rich. He always wears a *ring of spell turning*, which is his only magical treasure.

OSBRIN SELCHOUN (LN hm F3; ST 16, WIS 16). Osbrin is the fat, very short, red-faced proprietor of Selchoun's Sundries Shop in Sea Ward. He always seems out of breath, but has a rolling gait and an energetic, cheerful nature.

**PELDAN THRAEL** (LN hm F2). Peldan is middle-aged, of middling height, nondescript, and mustachioed. Overall, he is the type who blends well into crowds.

PERENDEL WINTAMER (NG hm W6; DEX 16, INT 18). Perendel is the proprietor of the Smiling Siren theater and nightclub in Castle Ward. He is a slim, young, intense lover of the arts, and the bearer of a dapper thin mustache. Perendel dreams of meeting and marrying a beautiful female bard. He is hopelessly smitten with the Simbul, whom he saw once from afar. She was using spells to blast a band of orcs to so much smoking meat.

PHALANTAR ORIVAN (NE hm T7; DEX 18, INT 16). Phalantar is a rich man who sponsors adventurers and

mercenaries, and guards himself with magical dusts and poisonous gases. He has become partially or wholly immune to many. He is the proprietor of Phalantar's Philtres & Components shop in Castle Ward. Phalantar always smiles gently and moves smoothly and quietly.

PHANDALUE TARINTHIL (NG hf F0; CHA 17). Phandalue is the breathtakingly beautiful counter clerk of the North Ward Aurora's outlet. Despite her sharp tongue and short tolerance for fools, she is constantly pursued by half the young noble males of Waterdeep.

QUENDEVER ILISTRYM(LN hm F0; CHA 16). Quendever Ilistrym owns and operates the Unicorn's Horn inn in Trades Ward. A haughty effete, very rich man of Amnian descent and noble airs, he likes to gamble and puts on disguises to go tavern crawling in Dock Ward for excitement. He is indolent and unskilled, but exceedingly handsome and well-mannered.

QUIRTAN ONDEVER (CN hm W10; INT 18). Quirtan is the service-mage of the North Ward Aurora's outlet. He is secretly a timid fan of adventurers and high-living nobles, and he always acts mysterious and sinister, as if at the heart of all intrigue in Water-deep. This manner amuses many, but also gets him invited to a lot of parties. To an adventurer, Quirtan is useful only as a source of information overheard at such feasts.

**REETHA** (CG hf F9; ST 18/04, CON 16). A barbarian of gentle humor with an impish derision for cultured ways and snobbery, Reetha has a love of wrestling with men as large and as



strong as herself, particularly adventurers.

RELCHOZ HRIIAT (CN hm F1; INT 17, WIS 16, CHA 16). Relchoz is the short, jolly, gluttonous proprietor of Hriiat Fine Pastries in North Ward. He is the public contact for the Bakers' Guild and—though most Waterdhavians would be astonished to learn it—one of the wealthiest investors in the city who has a share in almost a fifth of all current nonguild-exclusive business concerns.

RUUFDEIDEL "ROOVE" RESSATAR (CE hm T6; DEX 17, WIS 17). Ruufdeidel is a short, imp-like man who is always smiling and is good at hiding, moving silently, and passing unnoticed. Roove is one of the best eavesdroppers in Waterdeep, and can usually be found for hire in Mouse Alley.

SABBAR (CE hm W17?). Elminster has no idea if this infamous wizard is still alive or not. He had learned the means to travel the planes when he disappeared, and his sanity was not then what most folk would call stable, either. He is probably dead, but may yet reappear.

SAERGHON "THE MAGNIFTCENT" ALIR (LN hm W10). Saerghon the Magnificent is the service-mage for the Sea Ward outlet of Aurora's. A pompous man of airs and flourishes, Saerghon hasn't mastered half the magic he owns, and depends for his safety on the rings of spell turning and spell storing that he wears. (The ring of spell storing contains: invisibility fly, Evard's black tentacles, wizard eye, and feeblemind). Along with these two rings, Saerghon wears many other sparkling begemmed rings, so that every finger is adorned.

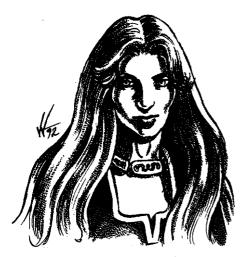
SELCHAROON NRIM (LN hm W6, INT 17). Selcharron is the bouncer at the Jade Dancer. An alert, grimly serious man who has gone bald young, but retains a ratty red beard, Secharoon is proud of his large, ornate (and enchanted—just what they do, he keeps secret) golden earrings. When on duty, he wears a *ring of invisibility* and a *ring of jumping* and wields a *wand of paralyzation*.

SHABRA THE BEGGAR QUEEN(CG hf P7). Shabra was once a priestess of Tymora—until she grew too cautious. She's still a 7th—level priestess because Tymora still remembers her youthful adventuring exploits fondly. Shabra will fight or attempt anything dangerous only in an emergency and has now 54 winters. The disarrangement that a specially enchanted *invisible mace* +4 hanging at her belt causes is concealed by a ragged half-cloak.

SHALANNA DUTHMERE (LN hf F1). Shalanna Duthmere is a pale, wornlooking lady from Daggerford who directs her six daughters in running the inn. She is a widow and is very tight with money. She secretly dreams that a dashing, handsome adventurer will ride in someday and make her happy for the rest of her days. The beauty of her teen-aged daughters makes it more likely that any dashing heroes will go for them instead.

SHALARA MALARKKIN (CG hf W2; DEX 16, INT 18, CHA 16). Shalar is the 16-year-old current apprentice of Kappiyan Flurmastyr. She is an earnest and emotional lass who keeps house for Kappiyan and wears breeches, boots, tunic, and a *periapt* 





Shyrrhr

of protection +1 (equal in effects to a magical ring of protection).

**SHALATH LYTHRYN** (LN hf F1). Shalath is kindly plain, middle-aged, and very; very observant.

**SHALRIN MERAEDOS** (LN hm F6 [now]; ST 16, INT 18, WIS 16). Shalrin, Gentleman Keeper of the Solemn Order of Recognized Furriers & Woolmen, is the careful, observant, soft-spoken proprietor of Maerados Fine Furs. The fur half-cloak he always wears conceals twin shoulder-sheathed swords of dancing that fly back to him when he calls them. He is known to use other protective magics and is rumored to have recently begun a stellar adventuring career in Undermountain and the Realms Below. He will not speak of such matters.

SHARRA OF THE INVISIBLE DRAGON(CG hf W21?). This wizardess dwells somewhere in the North, but is rumored to have an abode in Water-

deep to which she comes only in magical disguise. Her nickname comes from spells she's developed that allow her to duplicate many dragon powers, so that lesser mages have sworn she had an invisible dragon present to aid her. Elminster doesn't know what she's up to these days. She has been known to send warnings and information to local Harpers from time to time.

SHRYNDALLA "WERE-EYE" GHAULDUTH (CG hf W16).

SHULMEIRA GONDALIM (CG hf F0; DEX 17, INT 17). Shulmeira Gondalim is the proprietress of Gondalim's inn in Trades Ward, and the granddaughter of its founder. She is young, short, slim, and plain, but charming. She runs the inn with quiet expertise.

SHYRRHR (NG hf F0; DEX 16, CHA 16). Shyrrhr is a lady of the court who works for Piergeiron chaperoning-and spying on-diplomats and other important visitors. She was born in Deepingdale, but is now ranked as a noble in Waterdeep. A tall, perceptive woman with green eyes and long, straight bronze-hued hair, Shyrrhr is elegant, kind, soft-spoken, and can drink great amounts without becoming intoxicated. She is also very learned about elven customs.

**SIMON THRITHYN** (NG hm F3, ST 17, CON 16). The stolid innkeeper of the House of Good Spirits, Simon is a member of the Vintners' (et al.) Guild, and a timid, but capable, fighter.

SMILES. See Kaeroven.

STROMQUIL HALAZAR (CE hm W6 [now]: Illusionist; DEX 18, INT 18). This tall, aristocratic, and sneering man is a master jeweler, Guildmaster



of the Jewellers' Guild, and the proprietor of Halazar's Fine Gems in Sea Ward. He speaks softly and is always watchful. Stromquil is no doubt involved in smuggling and probably an agent for the Shadow Thieves (the outlawed Thieves' Guild).

TATHLA "FLAMEHAIR" NIGHTSTAR (CG hf F4/T5;DEX18,INT18,CHA16). Flamehair Nightstar is one of the shrewdest investors in Waterdeep today and a friend to good-aligned adventurers (as a retired adventurer herself).

"MOTHER" TATHLORN(NG hf F0; DEX 17, INT 16, WIS 18, CHA 16). Mother Tathlorn is the proprietress of Mother Tathlorn's House of Pleasure and Healing in Castle Ward. She is old, stout, charming skilled at massage, and perceptive of her customers' needs. She is a wise old lady who enjoys the company of folk and hearing about them—though she never passes on what she hears.

THOIM ZALAMM (LN spectator). Stranded in Faerun by long-ago magic, this calm individual entertains itself by observing life in Waterdeep, while taking care to avoid surprising adventurers and wizards who might attack it out of hand. The spectator likes to help adventurers, as their activities furnish it with much entertainment.

THUMIR AIN (CE hm T4; DEX 17, INT 16). Thumir is the rat-faced proprietor of Nueth's Fine Nets shop in South Ward. (Nueth has been dead for a dozen years.) He is alert and has a sarcastic tongue.

**THURVE THENTAVVA** (LN hm F0; DEX 18, INT 17). Thurve, the balding,

bespectacled, and always calm proprietor of Thentavva's Boots in Trades Ward, is a contact for the mysterious Red Sashes (detailed on page 35 of FR1 *Waterdeep and the North*). He is armed with a set of *iron bands of Bilarro*.

TIIRLON WINDSTAR (NG half-elf m F5; ST 16, DEX 16, CHA 16). Tiirlon is a dancer, escort, bartender, and partowner of the Copper Cup. A dignified fellow Tiirlong is a skilled piper and harpist, and *very* tall for his race—almost seven feet.

TORST URLIVAN (LE hm T4; ST 17, DEX 17, CON 16). A tall, withdrawn, dignified man who dresses richly but smells of the stables, Torst is a lover of horses, who—unbeknownst to Volo—fences stolen horses and harness. He is the proprietor of the Gentle Rest inn in Trades Ward.

UGLUKH VORL (LE half-orc m F6). Treat Uglukh's double axe as a halberd. If hit by it, a character must successfully save vs. poison or fall



"Mother" Tathlorn



asleep in 1-4 rounds. This slumber lasts for 2-5 turns despite any physical stimuli applied.

ULSCALEEZ ANBERSYR (NE hm F9; ST 17, WIS 17). Ulscaleer is a retired sea captain and pirate who is now owner and keeper of the Fiery Flagon in Sea Ward. Fat, old, and weather-beaten, he seems to know every sailor who enters the place. He is the owner of a not-so-secret connection to subterranean Skullport and a busy sponsor of smugglers.

**ULTHLO RELAJATYR** (LN hm F7; ST 17, DEX 17, WIS 17). Ulthlo is the floor manager and deputy security chief. of the Gentle Mermaid in North Ward, and the second-in-command to Eiraklon Marimmatar. Ulthlo is dedicated to making the Mermaid a safe, relaxed, wonderful place to visit. He is a careful, courteous man who's always thinking several steps ahead in any situation of potential danger. He is quite skilled at anticipating the tactics and attacks of skilled thieves and adventurers who use magic, accomplices, or the like. He directs a staff of bouncers, some of whom look deceptively like charming waitresses or escorts not suited for or used to any sort of fight.

UNGER FARSHAL (NE hm F6; ST 17). Unger is the bald, close-mouthed, sinister proprietor of the Grinning Lion tavern in North Ward. He knows, tolerates, and says nothing of criminal activities in the ward (which keep him in profits). Unger has been known to conceal muchwanted goods and folk for a short time in exchange for exhorbitant fees, and to have smuggling connec-

tions "down below"—in other words, with Skullport.

VINDARA TZUNTZIN (NG half-elf f W8; DEX 17, INT 18, CHA 16). Vindara is the half-owner of the Misty Beard tavern in North Ward. She is slim, lithe, sarcastic, and quick to spurn would-be suitors. She plans to make herself a mage of great might and a power in Waterdeep, or failing that, to build and head a half-elven community perhaps in nearby Ardeepforest. She owns and wields many wands (see the Misty Beard footnotes for a partial selection). She is firmly loyal to her sister, Allet.

VIVAELIA SUNDER(CN hf T6; DEX 17, CHA 15). Vivaelia is a dancer, escort, bartender, and part-owner of the Copper Cup. She is well known for her coldly planned revenges and investment acumen.

VOLOTHAMP GEDDARM (CG hm W5; INT 18, CON 17). Volothamp, or Volo, as he is more commonly called, is the author of this guide and of *Volo's* Guide to All Things Magical, a suppressed work. He was born in a bog somewhere in Faerun. He is widely traveled, learned in rare or strange spells of low to middling power (those he can cast), and is believed to have devised several minor but interesting spells concerned with the recording and snooping out of information. Volo is also a sage, with primary expertise in the spells and doings of human wizardkind and a secondary expertise (now occupying most of his energy and study) in the geography and lore of the known human realms of Faerun. Volo must conceal his identity from certain wizards





Volothamp Geddarm

whose spells he recently revealed—in the FORGOTTEN REALMS®Adventures sourcebook—or part company with his head (after he's spent "most of eternity as a dung beetle crushed under a rock at the bottom of a cesspool," to quote the (smiling) mage Snilloc).

VORN LASKADARR (NG hm F0). As the proprietor of the Dragon's Head tavern in Castle Ward, Vorn is a fast, efficient, and considerate host who also happens to be short, ugly, and stubble-faced. Vorn knows most of Waterdeep's officials, visiting diplomats, and their servants and agents by face and name.

WAESDEL UTHRUND (NE hm T3; DEX 16, INT 17). Waendel is the beady-eyed, always watchful proprietor of the Galloping Minotaur Inn in North Ward. A sardonic and grasping individual, he is a noted hard blade (merciless) moneylender who secretly backs smuggling slaving kidnapping' and thieving deals up and down the Sword Coast.

WELVREENE THALMIT (CN hf F2, ST 16, DEX 18, CHA 16). Welvreene, proprietress of the Crawling Spider tavern in Castle Ward, is a romantic who loves adventurers. She is petite, with a low purring, raw voice and alluring dark eyes. Danger is the spice she seeks, and she has been known to seek out the company of known thieves, slavers, maniacs, lycanthropes, and killers.

WHISTLEWINK (CN hm W24?). Elminster does not know this mage's true name or powers, but believes him to be part human and part Arcane, and a veteran traveler of many planes and worlds. He is eccentric, giggling and old, with a long, white beard. He wields many magic items and sells both major and minor magics. In Faerun, his shop has been known to appear atop the Earthspur mountain on the Dragonisle, in the Sea of Fallen Stars, and near Tashluta, as well as in Waterdeep. The shop is seldom seen, and Elminster believes Whistlewink's more concerned with events on other worlds.

WINESTAB (CE hm T6). Winestab is a thief who has at least two psionic wild talents: the psychometabolic devotions *catfall* and *displacement*.

XANATRAR HILLHORN (NG hm W11; INT 18, CHA 16). Xanatrar is the service-mage of the Castle Ward Aurora's chain outlet. A handsome man with an eye for ladies, he is known for his excellent singing. He is a regular at nobles' feasts.

XANDOS WAEVERYM (LN hm F1; INT 15, WIS 15). Xandos is manager of the Three Pearls Nightclub and is known as "the Dandy" around the city for his



pompous manner. He has a good sense of humor and feel for current public taste.

YAEREENE ILBAERETH (CG elven f W9; DEX 18, INT 18, WIS 16, CHA 16). Yaereene is the proprietress of the Elfstone Tavern in Castle Ward. She is tall, charming and regal, with silvery eyes. She is always armed with a ring of shooting stars and a wand of magic missiles, and always accompanied by a blue-green (old) faerie dragon named Pyrith (see Volume 3 of the Monstrous Compendium), who sits on her shoulder It will use its spells to protect her and the tavern.

YULULEE LANTANNAR (NG hf T4; DEX 18, CHA 16). Yululee is a dancer escort, bartender, and part-owner of the Copper Cup. She grew up as a Lantannan orphan child, stealing on the streets of Waterdeep. She stole the deed for the land on which the Cup now stands from the home of a merchant as he was being killed, downstairs, by another band of thieves. She acts simple and wideeyed, but is not, having the eyes and reactions of a hawk and the memory of a grudge-holding goddess.

YUTH SAMMARDOUN (LN hm T7; DEX 16, INT 16). Yuth is middle-aged and retired from thieving, but with the hair on his head (only) turned prematurely snow white. He is the proprietor of Maerghoun's Inn in Sea Ward. A cynical, cunning man who prides himself on his extreme discretion, Yuth is involved in smuggling and in keeping many many secrets, including hiding certain valuable items until they are reclaimed.

ZALANTHESS-DAUGHTER-OF-ZALANTHAR (NG hf B4; DEX 14, INT 14, CHA 16). Zalanthess is the house bard of the Three Pearls Nightclub. She is a skilled singer and harpist, and hails from Neverwinter.

ZARONRAR [OR ZORONDAR, he uses both] "THE NIMBLE" RIAUTAR (LN hm F6 [now]; ST 16, DEX 18, CHA 16).

Zarondar has a weapon specialization in light crossbow. He is proprietor of Riautar's Weaponry shop in Trades Ward, and a scowling, always wary man. He says little, but is nevertheless the public contact for the Fellowship of Bowyers and Fletchers.

ZOBIA SHRINSHA (pronounced SHRINshaww, CG hf W9; DEX 17, INT 18). Zobia is the quiet, but alert, proprietress of A Maiden's Tears tavern in North Ward. Her shy manner conceals a fearless nature and a curiosity about all her guests. She's been known to magically eavesdrop. She is a friend to the city watch and the Lords. She's always armed with at least two wands, and two rings as well, but what powers these have is not reliably known.

ZYGARTH "SLAYER" SAERN (LG hm F7; DEX 18, INT 18, WIS 16). Zygarth is the proprietor of Saern's Fine Swords shop in Trades Ward. He has acquired the ability to determine with 96% accuracy the age, quality, and condition of steel at a glance. He is 76% likely to realize that a blade carries a magical dweomer merely by looking at it. He is tall, gaunt, smiling, and unassuming. Few know he is a warrior, as his nickname was bestowed by a noble in jest.



## Appendix II: INDEX of Places

The abbreviations in parentheses following each entry represent the ward the location is found in.

Abbreviation	Ward
(CW)	Castle Ward
(CW) (SeaW)	Sea Ward
(NW)	North Ward
(TW)	Trades Ward
(SW)	South Ward
(DW)	Dock Ward

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### opendix III: Lor Map

#### Castle Ward

**Mount Waterdeep:** Harbor defense for Waterdeep, topped by lookout tower.

Castle Waterdeep: Four hundred feet high at the highest point, walls 60 feet thick, fully prepared to defend and sustain the population of the city.

Ahghairon's Tower: Landmark' magically protected, unenterable ever since its owner's death.

**1.** Mirt's Mansion (Home of Mirt "the Moneylender")

2. Crommor's Warehouse

3. The Sailors' Own (tavern) **4.** The Yawning Portal (inn)

5. The Red-Eyed Owl (tavern)

6. The Sleepy Sylph (tavern)7. Barracks of the Guard

8. Smithy of the Guard

**9.** Bell Tower

**10.** House of Naneatha Lhaurilstar, Lady of Waterdeep

11. The House of Gems (HQ: The Jeweller's Guild)

12. Mother Tathlorn's House of Pleasure (festhall and

spa)

13. House of Loene the fighter

14. House of Shyrrhr, Lady of the Court

**15.** The Map House (HQ: The Surveyors', Map & Chart-Makers' Guild)

16. Fellowship Hall (HQ: The Fellowship of Innkeepers)
17. Palace Warehouse

18. Palace Stables **19.** Palace Paddocks

**20.** The Dragon's Head Tavern

**21.** The Golden Key (locksmith)

**22.** The Master Bakers' Hall (HQ: The Bakers' Guild)

23. The Crawling Spider (tavern)

24. The Elfstone Tavern **25.** House of Velstrode the

Venturer

26. Halambar Lutes & Harps

27. Hilmer Warehouse 28. The Halls of Hilmer,

Master Armorer 29. Balthorr's Rare and

Wondrous Treasures **30.** Tower of the Order (HQ: The Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors)

**31.** The Smiling Siren (nightclub)

**32.** Blackstaff Tower (home of Kelben "Blackstaff" Arunson)

33. Phalantar's Philtres & Components

**34.** Guildhall of the Order (HO: The Solemn Order of Recognized Furriers & Woolmen)

**35.** The Jade Jug (inn)

**36.** The Blue Jack (tavern)

**37.** Pewterers' and Casters' Guildhall (guild HQ:

**38.** Olmhazan's Jewels

**39.** House of the Fine Carvers (HO: The Guild of Fine Carvers)

**40.** The Pampered Traveler (inn)

41. The Singing Sword (tavern)

42. The Market Hall (HQ: The Council of Farmer-Grocers)

**43.** The Spires of the Morning (temple complex of Lathander)

**44.** Usual location of the Walking Statue of Waterdeep

**45.** Fair Winds (rental villa)

Marblehearth (rental villa)

47. Stormwatch (rental villa) Heroes' Rest (rental villa)

#### Sea Ward

49. The House of Heroes (temple complex of Tempus)

**50.** Haľazar's Fine Gems Shop **51.** The Ship's Wheel (tavern)

**52.** Pilgrim's Rest (inn)

53. The Wandering Wemic

**54.** The House of Purple Silks (festhall)

55. Gounar's Tavern

**56.** The House of the Moon (temple complex of Selune)

**57.** Tchazzam family villa 58. Maerghoun's Inn

**59.** Dacer's Inn

**60.** The House of Inspired Hands (temple complex of Gond)

**61.** The Fiery Flagon (tavern)

**62.** Ruldegost family villa 63. The Dragon Tower of Maaril

**64.** Ilzimmer family villa

**65.** Urmbrusk family villa **66.** Moonstar family villa

67. Assumbar family villa

**68.** Cassalanter family villa **69.** Zulpair family villa

70. Husteem family villa

**71.** The Tower of Luck (temple complex of Tymora)

72. Wavesilver family villa 73. "Naingate" (tower of Nain the wizard)

74. Melshimber family villa

75. Iltul family villa **76.** Shrine of Mielikki (The Lady's Hands)

77. Shrine of Silvanus

**78.** Emvoelstone family villa 79. Hiilgauntlet family villa

**80.** The Temple of Beauty (temple complex of Sune)

**81.** Gauntyl family villa **82.** Eltorchul family villa

83. The House of Wonder (temple of Midnightformerly Mystra)



**84.** Eirontalar family villa

85. Selchoun's Sundries Shop

**86.** Thongolir family villa **87.** Eagleshield family villa

88. Dezlentyr family villa

89. Tesper family villa

90. Nesher family villa91. Brokengulf family villa

**92.** Belabranta family villa **93.** Irlingstar family villa

**94.** Gundwynd family villa **95.** Tessalar's Tower

**96.** Raventree family villa **97.** Bladesemmer family villa

**98.** Manthar family villa **99.** Artemel family villa

100. Ammakyl family villa

**101.** Silmerhélve family villa **102.** Rosznar family villa

103. Jhansczil family villa

#### North Ward

104. The House of Crystal (HQ: The Guild of Glassblowers, Glaziers, & Speculum-Makers)

105. House of Crystal Warehouse

**106.** Adarbrent family villa **107.** Agundar family villa

**108.** Kothont family villa **109.** Sultlue family villa

**110.** The Galloping Minotaur (inn)

111. Súlmest's Splendid Shoes & Boots

**112.** Meraedos Fine Furs (shop)

**113.** Phylund family villa **114.** The Gentle Mermaid (tavern and festhall)

**115.** Maernos family villa **116.** Cragsmere family villa

117. The House of Healing (HQ: The Guild of Apothecaries & Physicians)

**118.** Amcathra family villa **119.** Lanngolyn family villa

**120.** Mascalan family villa **121.** Talmost family villa

122. Piiradost family villa

**123.** Crommor family villa **124.** Brossfeather family villa

125. Wands family villa
126. Hunabar family villa
127. Duringhold family vill

**127.** Durindbold family villa **128.** Hothemer family villa

**129.** Margaster family villa

**130.** Thorp family villa

**131.** Estelmer family villa **132.** Maerklos family villa

133. Ulbrinter family villa

**134.** Hriiat Fine Pastries **135.** The Grinning Lion

(tavern) **136.** Gost family villa

**137.** Lathkule family villa

138. Nandar family villa

139. Thann family villa

**140.** Thunderstaff family villa

**141.** Anteos family villa

**142.** Phull family villa **143.** Snome family villa

143. Snome family villa 144. Helmfast family villa

145. Roaringhorn family

villa **146.** Kormallis family villa

**147.** Majarra family villa **148.** Tarm family villa

149. Stormmweather family

**150.** Jardeth family villa

**151.** Hawkwinter family villa **152.** Gralhund family villa

153. The Raging Lion (inn)

**154.** A Maiden's Tears (tavern) **155.** The Misty Beard (tavern)

**156.** The Cliffwatch (inn)

**157.** Cliffwatch inn stables **158.** Zun family villa

159. Ilvastarr family villa

**160.** House of Orlpar Husteem, noble

#### The City of The Dead

Unkeyed tombs are of individual noble or wealthy families. In several cases nobles families share a tomb, which usually leads to separate crypts beneath, and several floors above.

**161.** Mariner's Rest (those drowned at sea and ship

captains)

**162.** The Hall of Heroes (warriors' tomb)

163. The Hall of Sages (sages)164. Monument to the warriors of Waterdeep

**165.** Merchants' Rest ("The Coinscoffin" tomb, resting place of only those who prepay for the honor)

**166.** Ahghairon's Statue **167.** The House of the

Homeless (all who do not merit or cannot buy another tomb)

#### Trades Ward

Virgin's Square: Traditional hiring place for mercenaries and legendary sacrificial spot.

**168.** The Inn of the Dripping Dagger

Dagger

**169.** The Riven Shield Shop **170.** House of Myrmith Splendon (fighter)

171. Mhair's Tower

**172.** Dunblast Roofing Company

173. Gondalim's (inn)

174. The Citadel of the Arrow (HQ: The Fellowship of Bowyers & Fletchers)

175. Saern's Fine Swords 176. Costumers' Hall (HQ: The

Order of Master Taylor, Glovers, & Mercers)

177. Thentevva's Boots

178. The Unicorn's Horn (inn)

**179.** Orsabba's Fine Imports **180.** Riautar's Weaponry

181. The House of Song (HQ: The Council of Musicians, Instrument-Makers, and Choristers)

**182.** Patient Fingers Finework

**183.** Office of the League of Basketmakers & Wickerworkers (guild HQ)

**184.** Warehouse of the League of Basketmakers & Wickerworkers

**185.** The House of Cleanliness (HQ: The Launderers' Guild)

**186.** The Old Guildhall (HQ: The Cellarers and Plumbers Guild)

**187.** Thond Glass and Glazing

188. Belmonder's Meats

189. The Zoarstar

**190.** The House of Textiles (HQ: The Most Excellent Order of Weavers and Dyers)

**191.** The Gentle Rest (inn)



192. Gentle Rest Inn stables

193. Felzoun's Folly (tavern) 194. Surtlan's Metalwares

**195.** The Guild Paddock (HQ: The Stablemasters' and Farriers' Guild)

**196.** The Golden Horn Gambling House

**197.** Meiroth's Fine Silks **196.** The Bowels of the Earth

(tavern)

**199.** Cobblers' and Corvisers' House (guild HQ)

200. The House of Light (HQ: The Guild of Chandlers & Lamplighters)

201. Chandlers & Lamplighters' Guild warehouse

**202.** Stationers' Hall (HQ: The Stationers' Guild)

**203.** The Plinth (interdenominational temple)

204. The Grey Serpent (inn)
205. Wheel Hall (HQ: The Wheelwrights' Guild)

#### Southern Ward

**206.** The Stone House (HQ: The Carpenters', Roofers', and Plaisterer's Guild)

**207.** Brian the Swordmaster **208.** The Jade Dancer (tavern

and festhall)
209. Nueth's Fine Nets
210. The Spouting Fish
(tavern)

**211.** The Red Gauntlet (tavern)

212. Pelauvir's Counter

(goods store) 213. The Swords' Rest (tavern)

214. The House of Good Spirits (HQ: The Vintners', Distillers', and Brewers Guild and a working tavern and inn)

215. The Redbridle Stables 216. The Coach & Wagon Hall (HQ: The

Wagonmakers' and Coach Builders' Guild)

217. Saddlers' & Harness-Makers' Hall (guild HQ)

**216.** House of Kappiyan Flurmaster (wizard)

219. Builders' Hall (HQ: The Guild of Stonecutters and Masons)

**220.** Nelkaush the Weaver **221.** The Full Cup (tavern)

222. The Road House (HQ: The Fellowship of Carters and Coachmen)

**223.** Prestar's Furniture **224.** Hlakken Stables

225. Metalmasters' Hall (HQ: The Most Careful Order of Skilled Smiths & Metalforgers)

**226.** Bellister's Hand (shop) **227.** Bellister's House

(warehouse)

228. Orm's Highbench (trading company)

(trading company) **229.** Athlal's Stables

#### Dock Ward

Waterdeep Harbor: Patrolled by hired mermen against invaders, predators, and hazards to shipping.

230. Cookhouse Hall231. Gelfuril the Trader232. The Copper Cup (tavern,

inn, festhall)

233. Thomm Warehouse234. Melgard's Fine Leathers235. The Butchers' Guildhall

(HQ: The Guild of Butchers) **236.** House of Jemuril

(adventurer)
237. Fish Warehouse (belongs to the Fishmongers' Fellowship)

238. Smokehouse (belongs to the Fishmongers' Fellowship; also used by butchers or a fee)

239. Telethar Leatherworks240. Torpus the Tanner

241. League Hall (HQ: The League of Skinners & Tanners)

242. Mariners' Hall (HQ: The Master Mariners' Guild) 243. Shipmasters' Hall

244. Watermen's Hall (HQ: The Guild of Watermen) 245. The Sleeping Spake

**245.** The Sleeping Snake (tavern)

246. Nestaur the Ropemaker247. Khostal Hannass, Fine Nuts

248. Felhaur's Fine Fish 249. The Blushing Mermaid (inn, tavern, festhall)

250. Seaswealth Hall (HQ: The Fishmongers' Fellowship)251. Full Salls (tavern; HQ:

240

The Most Diligent League of Sail-Makers and Cordwainers)

**252.** Arnagus the Shipwright **253.** The House of Tarmagus (warehouse)

254. The Fellowship of Salters, Packers, and Joiners warehouse

**255.** Coopers' Rest (HQ: The Coopers Guild)

**256.** Shippers' Hall (HQ: The Fellowship of Salters, Packers, and Joiners)

**257.** The Blue Mermaid (tavern)

**258.** The Hanged Man (tavern)

259. The House of Pride (perfume shop)260. The Purple Palace

260. The Purple Palace (festhall)261. The Sleeping Wench

(tavern) **262.** The Hanging Lantern

(escort service) **263.** Muleskull Tavern (HQ: The Dungsweepers' Guild)

264. The Mermaids Arms (inn, tavern, festhall)265. Red Sails Warehouse

**266.** Shipwrights' House (HQ: The Order of Master Shipwrights)

**267.** Helmstar Warehouse **268.** The Ship's Prow (inn)

269. The Thirsty Sailor (tavern)

270. Warm Beds (inn)271. Lanternmaker Zorth Ulmaril

**272.** The Bloody Fist (tavern ["dive"])

**273.** Three Pearls Nightclub **274.** The Thirsty Throat

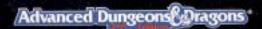
(tavern) 275. Serpentil Books & Folios

276. The Blackstar Inn277. The Splintered Stair (inn)

**278.** The Rearing Hippocampus (inn)

279. The Metal House of Wonders (HQ: The Splendid Order of Armorers, Locksmiths, and Finesmiths)

280. Turnstone Plumbing and Pipefitting281. Dhaermos Warehouse





# Volo's Guide to WATERDEEP

#### By Ed Greenwood

Well met, traveler!

You hold in your hands an amusing and insightful guide to Waterdeep—the metropolis of the North, the City of Splendors. This handy pouch-sized tome presents Volo's choice of the finest, most spectacular, and least known (but most desired) information about the people, customs, and locations in Waterdeep—ranked with a handy coin, dagger, pipe, and tankard ratings system.

#### Discover:

- What it's like to attend a private party hosted by Waterdhavian nobles.
- Where Waterdeep's ghosts walk,
- Legends and clues about famous, as-yet-unrecovered treasures,
- What fare a typical Waterdhavian menu offers you,
- The best moon-kissed spots to meet Waterdhavians of the opposite sex.
- Waterdeep's best shops and craftsmen.
- The best places to dine, stay, see—and, of course, avoid!

#### Suitable for all levels of play.

Special Note: This edition of Volo's Guide to Waterdeep, intended for travelers from beyond the borders of Facrun, contains notes and commentary by the famous archmage and sage Elminster.



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Advanced Dungeons Dragons

9393

FORGOTTEN REALING

Volo's Guide to the

NORTH

By Ed Greenwood

## Volo's Guide To the North

#### Wind by The Fireside

So as you shiver in the cold and the dark, Look into the fire and see in its spark— My eye Watching over you.

((((()))

As you walk in the wind's whistling claws. Listen past the howling of the wolf's jaws. My song Comes to you.

And when you're lost in trackless snow, Look up high where the eagles go. My star Shines for you.

(CO)

In deep, dark mine or on crumbling peak, Hear the words of love I speak. My thoughts Are with you.

((((()))

You are not forsaken. You are not forgotten. The North cannot swallow you. The snows cannot bury you. I will come for you. Faerûn will grow warmer, And the gods will smile But oh, my love, guard yourself well-All this may not happen for a long, long while.

(A traditional trail ballad of the Savage Frontier composer unknown)



#### Credits

**Design:** Ed Greenwood

**Editing:** Victor K. Wertz, Lisa Stevens, and Kathryn Haines **Additional Editing:** Julia Martin and Karen S. Boomgarden

Cover Art: John and Laura Lakey Interior Art: Valerie Valusek

Cartography: Cynthia Felegy, Rob Lazzaretti, and David Sutherland III

Typesetting: Angelika Lokotz Production: Paul Hanchette

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TSR, Inc. POB 756 Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA



TSR Ltd. 120 Church End Cherry Hinton Cambridge CB1 3LB United Kingdom



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## Preface

I don't know how he talks me into these things. Look ye-another tome of hilarious misinformation about part of the Realms, from the irrepressible, nay, pompous and pretentious Volo. This time, he's presuming to tell travelers something of where to go and what to do in the northern Sword Coast-that part of Faerûn we still call the Savage Frontier. It lies north of Waterdeep for as far north as the snow blows, east of the Sea of Swords and west of Anauroch. It's a land of endless mountains and vast forests, home to more gems and metal riches-and to more orcs and worse monsters-than any other region of Faerûn.

I'd feel a mite guilty if I let fools trust in Volo's guidance without a little warning. Fools? Aye. Anyone who ventures north of Waterdeep for mere entertainment must be a fool. Even those who do it to earn riches are ruled by reckless greed, not good sense.

But enough. It is for such that I've agreed to provide a crucial modicum of behind-the-scenes information. My colleague, Ed of the Greenwood, has recast my words into notations of import to gamers. I must warn all of ye: it's been many long winters since I was that special sort of fool known as an "adventurer" in the North. My lore is surely incomplete and outdated—surpassed in faults only by the work of the esteemed Volo. Gods give ye good luck, readers—you'll assuredly need it!

Elminster of Shadowdale

Volo's Ratings System			
<b>Pipes</b> (Inns)	<b>Tankards</b> (Taverns)	<b>Coins</b> (Prices)	<b>Daggers</b> (Alleyways, Courtyards, etc.)
Worst 3	ð	*	Unsafe
Y BB	OO	8 8	B
Better 15 15 15	OOO		B Dangerous
* BBBB	OOOO		III V
Best BBBBB			JJJJ Deadly



## A word from Volo



o all who would see the splendors of the Savage North: Well met! Welcome to the only guidebook to the perils and glories of the

fabled lands north of Waterdeep.

You've heard of the Savage Frontier, I know. Folk all across Faerûn hear of the North, where countless monsters roam dark and trackless forests, and snow and wind howl into mountain valleys where no human has ever walked. White dragons wing over realms of tortured ice; korred dance and treants walk. Everywhere, cruel and hungry orcs lurk with ready blades.

These tales are not fanciful. I've been there, and I know! This is the only guide-book to the Savage Frontier, because few dare to go where I have gone, to see first-hand the beauty and the dangers—and of the few who did go, not many survived.

In these pages, you'll read my practical reports of the best inns, taverns, and places to see or avoid. Don't set forth without your blade (or a good wand, if blades aren't your style) and this book. I must admit that I soon took to wearing a *ring of warmth*, as well.

I've fallen in love with these rugged lands, and recommend visiting them to both adventurers and enterprising merchants. The North is where most of the gold, iron, gemstones, and mithral in the Realms come from, as well as the huge trees from which most large ships of the

Sword Coast are built. Many a fortune has been made by venturing boldly into remote corners of the North. Your riches may be next.

Come North with me, after reading two words of warning:

- This book is your guide to the friendly locations in the North. Once off the trails, you're on your own.
- Until you've slept a night out under the stars of the North, you don't know what cold is. Bring extra clothing to wear, and even more to burn, to keep yourself warm. Don't, I beg, burn your guidebook—the information herein may save your life several times over.

If it does, tell your friends, and look for my other guidebooks. Keep in mind this one blessing from the gods: In the North, there are few insects, and remarkably fewer of the sort that sting, bite, or buzz around the heads of humans<sup>1</sup>

May good fortune find you on the trail and lead you to what you're looking for. Whatever befalls, though, I urge you to remember with favor the name of:

#### Volo

(Volothamp Geddarm)



P.S. Despite hunting many days, I've never laid eyes on the fabled Hunter-of-Men—the many-fanged crag cat of the North I'd very much like to hear from anyone who has met this feared predator, and survived to tell the tale.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Note from Elminster: Don't believe him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster has. For details of this beast, see Appendix III.



## Savage Frontier



now, O traveler, that this guidebook should be at your belt, as essential as dagger or blade, when you venture north of the

city of Waterdeep (the subject, for those who have not yet had the pleasure, of my previous book!).

In the tome you hold, I provide an introduction to the inns, taverns, sights, and local details worth knowing, if you'd like to survive a journey into the northern Sword Coast, called by some the Savage Frontier.

For the purposes of this work-and



despite the endless arguments of sages—the North is all the land east of the waves breaking along the Sword Coast and west of the Great Desert, Anauroch. Between these bounds, we take in all the land north of Waterdeep, as far as humans know and walk.

This untamed land is far too vast for even a person who lived a thousand years to see every corner. There are many places in the North I've not been, and many things I've not seen. Let that not deter you; what is here is correct in every detail, and exhaustive in its inquiry. Where danger or circumstances prevented my visiting an important locale, you'll find all I could learn of it from the most reputable sources.

The North is a vast and wonderful—though too often deadly and chillingly cold-region. It encompasses most of the different types of terrain I've known in Faerûn, except the extremes of jungle and desert.

For your convenience, I've divided the area into five somewhat artificial regions.

The Dessarin is the surprisingly fertile center of the North. It's a long valley drained by the River Dessarin, which runs like a sword into the heart of the northern wilderlands. It is this river that serves most travelers as their road to the interior.

¹Elminster's note: Don't believe a single bejeweled word of this.

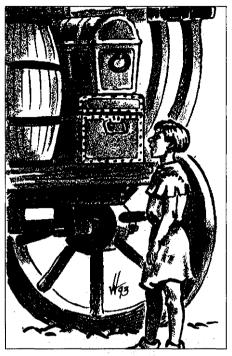


The Coast covers the Sword Coast from Waterdeep to where grinding ice forces ships to turn back. It's a narrow strip of storm-lashed land where most of the cities of the North stand.

The Frozenfar is a term used in Amn and the Inner Sea lands (and heard betimes in the Shining South, too) to describe Mirabar, and the mines and frozen mountains north of it. It traditionally includes Icewind Dale and the Howling Ice Plain beyond. I use the name as it is used elsewhere, to collectively describe the icy interior around the peaks known as the Spine of the World, where dwarves and humans claw precious metal out of the rock.

The Interior is the remote region that folk of warmer areas picture when they hear the words the North. It is centered on Silverymoon and Sundabar, and takes in many mountains and valleys where no human has walked. These are places where orcs lurk, building their numbers until a new horde sweeps down toward the rich south, slaying and carving bloody destruction as they come. It is the area least touched by humans, where the richest gold and gem lodes of all Faerûn are said to lie in wait for those who can claim them.

If the Dessarin thrusts like a sword blade into the heart of the North, *Delimbiyr Vale* is a scimitar curving around to strike up at the northern wastes along the edge of Anauroch. This crescent of land



provides a long and perilous road to the North, up the valley of the River Delimbivr.<sup>2</sup>

The two great rivers of the North are separated by the High Forest, the greatest wood in known Faerûn. Were I a treant, this would no doubt be a region of the North all to itself—and the foremost one. Humans have rarely penetrated far into this vast green realm, and so it is not dealt with in this book.

What you will find in this guide-book, though, are the best sights and places to stay that I found on my travels. Many of them are places I'd settle in to live out my days if it weren't for a little thing called *winter*.

Death can swiftly find the traveler

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>By local tradition, Secomber and Zundbridge aren't considered part of the North, so they don't appear here.



who hasn't known true cold—beware!

A haughty Calishite strode past me out of an inn one clear, cold night. After a few flagons I resumed my journey, only to find the southerner not far along my road, frozen stiff as ice! The cold had caught him in midstride, and it had frozen his heart, I guess.

On my wanderings, I saw many amulets against Auril's breath, and many offerings left at her altars, to ward off the cold.

Why? Ah, if you can ask that, you haven't felt the true teeth of the North. It's a cold that stabs at your lungs like a sword thrust, and makes your breath freeze in the air in front

of your mouth, only to fall like a tinkling rain of icicles as you stride forward. It's a cold that causes skin to stick to metal like glue, and to peel away from flesh like a discarded glove; a cold that makes boots crack into tatters after a short walk, leaving the exposed feet to share their fate. It's a cold that can make a priest believe in other gods and a wizard doubt the power of magic! Never walk naked to the outhouse at night in the North, or it will be a one-way trip.

Looking forward to seeing the North? I knew you would be! Remember that beyond the views that take your breath away there are amazing amounts of gold, gems, silver, and more!

#### A Wanning to Travelers

The North is far too large a place for anyone to provide a proper guidebook, and this fellow Volo is the only traveler foolish enough to try, thus far. So, you're stuck with this tome. It's useful enough for choosing beds, platters, and alleys to keep thy nose out of, so long as ye stick to well-traveled, civilized areas. Those who'd go off the trails are warned: You'll face real danger in the backlands and high valleys that even Volo has never seen. Fair weather, then, and have ye a good trip!

Elminster of Shadowdale





### A Note About Wands



n unusual, impressive, and potentially deadly feature of the North is its wards. Intended to keep undesirables like

orcs, brigands, and hungry monsters out, these are usually seen as rings of mist. They are often set up around inns, abbeys, keeps, and other inhabited places.

Many an inn has a ward around its stables, gardens, and yard, hidden from the road or approach by a palisade or planting of trees. Most wards have tokens that allow someone to pass through the ward without suffering any of its effects, and in some cases without even knowing it is present. These tokens often are set into the door lintel or doorstep of an inn, so patrons can pass freely in and out without hindrance or challenge. In other cases, a token is affixed to the staff, breastplate, or baton of a door warden.

I'm sure I missed noticing some wards with concealed tokens, but wherever possible, I've identified wards and their tokens throughout this guide.

Be warned: Thieves value ward tokens highly. Open possession of one can be hazardous. However, unless challenged by a human guard, showing a token openly is never necessary. Wards work from inside a pack or under one's shirt just as well as if brandished overhead.

The magic of wards is beyond me, as it is beyond most wizards and priests today. Although many wizards' towers have wards, few have multiple spells, or powerful guardians like the ancient wards found around some ruins and tombs in Netheril and other such lands.

Travelers contemplating removal of a ward taken for later use should note that wards seem to give magical warning of token movement. Also, know that tokens are built into some room keys. Travelers planning to cast spells in the privacy of their rooms, or trusting in magic for protection are also warned that some wards prevent certain spells from operating, or cause the spells to backfire on the caster with disastrous results. Wizards staying in inns in the North often stay out late to cast spells from the nearest place of concealment. This is generally not recommended, unless you have companions to guard against night predators.

Travelers staying in abbeys or temple-owned inns are often warned up front about magic bans. Private innkeepers, though, are often more reticent, preferring to let dangerous guests reveal their powers to their own misfortune.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Readers looking for hard game information are directed to Appendix II of this book, wherein Elminster reveals some details of wards.







# The Dessarin



ong ago, before there were roads anywhere north of Tethyr, the Dessarin was known as the Road to the North.

The river reaches up past Waterdeep to the Evermoors, and into the eastern end of the Spine of the World.

When humankind first explored the North, we chose the surprisingly fertile Dessarin delta for our first settlements. To this date, more humans live in the long, broad valley of the Dessarin than in any other part of the Savage Frontier. The farms and ranches of the delta feed the North, nourishing remote mining settlements as well as the orc hordes that sweep down the Dessarin every decade or so.

Minstrels often describe the Dessarin as a sword thrusting up into the heart of the North. In fact, the river itself was once known as the Sword. This is important knowledge to those puzzling out Netherese and other ancient writings, trying to locate important sites or priceless treasure.

The Long Road, running parallel to the river along the west side, is definitely the best road in the North. Much of interest may be found along this avenue.

Travelers are advised not to hunt large game on lands claimed by a lord or village. It is also highly inadvisable to take down cattle or trample crops in any case. Small foraging vermin of the sort that consume crops, however, may be freely killed and eaten.

Large herds of deer are found along the western edge of the High Forest, and those eager to hunt are directed to Noanar's Hold. Be warned, though, that satyrs sometimes drive the deer in order to lead human hunters into ambushes and pitfall traps.

The Dessarin region is known for its spectacular sunsets and wide sky above. It is favored by those who like to gallop horses long and hard.

Travelers planning overland journeys in the northern Dessarin should bear in mind that the lichen— and shrub-covered moors are a favored dwelling of trolls. No matter how often these loathsome creatures are eliminated from the Evermoors, they still creep back down from mountain fastnesses again. Many nearby settlements send expeditions up onto the moors to give their fighters battle experience, because one can always count on meeting some trolls there.

I visited, and have reported on, the following places in the Dessarin:
Amphail, Bargewright Inn, Beliard,
Calling Horns, Conyberry, Goldenfields, Griffon's Nest, Grunwald,
Kheldell, Longsaddle, Mornbryn's
Shield, Nesmé, Noanar's Hold, Rassalantar, Red Larch, Triboar, Westbridge, Xantharl's Keep, and Yartar.
Their entries appear alphabetically





hereafter. I also spent some time in a place called Uluvin. I found that it didn't really merit a section of its own, so you'll find a brief overview of it in the section of this guidebook entitled "Other Places of Note in the North"

A word of warning about the Dessarin and its tributaries—cross only at bridges. There is Zundbridge at the mouth of the river, and a bridge that has only recently replaced the old ford at Ironford. You may also cross at Dead Horse Ford, but don't attempt this in the spring, or you may well learn firsthand how the ford got its name.

The Surbrin is bridged just north of its confluence with the Dessarin, at Yartar, and at Nesmé. The Rauvin is bridged at Everlund, at Sundabar, and at Silverymoon, where it is spanned by the famous Moonbridge. The Laughingflow (known as the *Trollflow* in nearby Nesmé) and the Rauvin are not safe rivers; orcs, trolls, and barbarians wait to attack river travelers. Someone busy poling a raft will probably find it hard to dodge volleys of arrows fired from cover along the bank, so dress accordingly.

The Dessarin itself is fast-flowing, cold, and deep for most of its length. It is navigable as far north as Dancing Falls, at the base of the Lost Peaks. A small boat turning up the Rauvin can paddle and pole as far north as Dead Orc Pass, northeast of Sundabar. You can navigate up the Surbrin almost to its source, or up the Redrun as far as the Citadel of Many Arrows.

The Dessarin is home to many silver, troutlike fish that grow to two feet in length. These are called shalass, and they're highly prized on tables throughout the North. These are best caught in a particular type of fish basket called a cone net. Such baskets are mounted on long, sturdy poles, and they require great strength to hold. Expert fisherfolk use long spears to stab the swimming fish from the bank, or from a raft or hoat

The persistent traveler can also find catfish, coldwater crabs, and small brown fish known as lout. The last are tasty when pan-fried, but you need seven or so to fill the pan. The chilly waters of the Dessarin also hold larger and more dangerous life, so beware!



## Amphail

This village lies on the Long Road, a good three days' ride north of Water-deep. About 600 folk call Amphail home (850, if the population of outlying farms is included). Most are humans, but there are half-elves and a smattering of dwarves and halflings.

Amphail is named for one of Waterdeep's early warlords, Amphail the Just, who had estates here. Though all traces of his keep are long gone, it is said that Amphail still rides the area in spirit form, frightening away trolls and hostile barbarians.

In all seasons except deep winter, the village is patrolled by Waterdeep from an outpost in Rassalantar. Amphail is ruled by a Lord Warder, currently a quiet-spoken, trimbearded man named Briiathor Alougarr, whose gray eyes miss little. The Lord Warder swears fealty to Piergeiron of Waterdeep. In return, the City of Splendors provides military strength, a Warder's purse of 600 gp quarterly, and many orders for fresh mounts from local horse breeders, notably the Selember ranch.

Amphail is a quiet but beautiful place. By night or in a snowstorm, the

traveler can mark it by the thick stands of dark duskwood and spruce trees that cluster along the road.

This farming village is pleasant to the eyes of all. In hot summer weather, though, it is only pleasant to the noses of those who like horse manure. The folk of Amphail are famous for breeding and training horses. They have traditionally equipped the noble families and armies of Waterdeep and the armies of Neverwinter, as well as merchants and satraps of Amn and Calimshan.

Fine horses are plentiful here. However, those thinking to just ride off on some are warned that the Roaringhorn family maintains a patrol of 12 skilled knights<sup>2</sup> to deal with horse thieves. This patrol is guided by the scrying of six youthful Roaringhorn sorceresses who dwell on the family farm. These young ladies often show up in the saddles of pegasi, wands at the ready, if the patrol runs into monsters or thieves using magic.

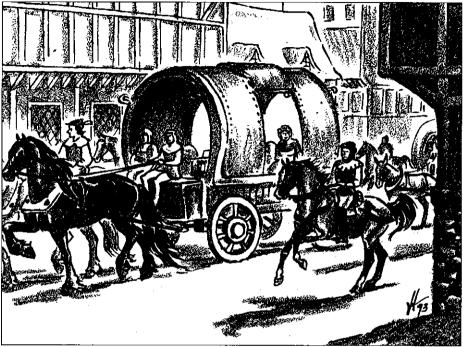
Amphail grays are famous across Faerûn as intelligent, loyal, and hardy personal mounts, but most soldiers prefer the larger, more powerful glossy black chargers bred in

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Briiathor Alougarr is an LN hm F3, and a member of Waterdeep's city guard, though he will tell people he has retired if asked outright. He is absolutely loyal to Piergeiron and an old battle-companion of Khelben "Blackstaff" Anmsun, for whom he has occasionally hidden persons or items.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>All are F5s to F13s clad in scale mail, with shields, full weaponry, and expert knowledge of the countryside. They ride the swiftest Roaringhorn horses, which are truly fast mounts. The patrol is guided by the family sorceresses (W7s to W13s, most bearing wands of paralysis and magic missiles), as noted. The sorceresses are prim but bored young nieces, noted for their mischief. They share a taste for long, straight hair and outlandish gowns, and they delight in hurling lightning bolts when they want to make an impression.

When I asked for their names, Elminster raised his eyebrows, told me to leave cradles alone, and yielded up the names Aurila, Ileera, Olone, Phanshara, Tlanteth, and Velareene. He warned me that their tutor, Ambara, was a retired adventuress (and W16) who knew all the tricks of wizards and rogues alike and was not to be trifled with. Elminster asserts that Ambara is the main reason the fine horses of Amphail are safe from the covetous mages of Calimshan.





Amphail. The various Waterdhavian noble families who keep stables here have traditionally been major breeders, notably the Amcathra, Ilzimmer, Jhansczil, Roaringhorn, and Tarm families. The independent stable masters Ohm "Steelhand" Oglyntyr, Rorth Baldasker, and Elraghona Selember are also noted breeders.

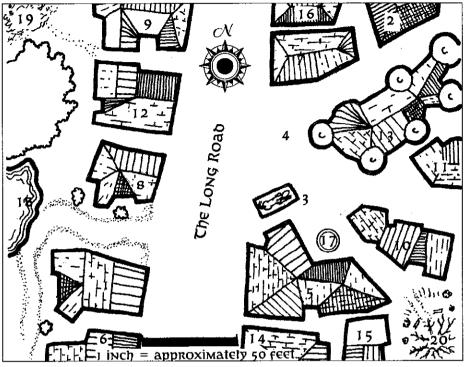
The whip-wielding Ilzimmer racing teams frequently tear up and down the Long Road, practicing. Travelers should beware; these teams have been known to ride down (or "not see") lone walkers in their way, and tend to answer with ready blades those who dispute this use of the road. Every year, the Ilzimmer family fields teams at the Sword Coast races outside Baldur's Gate.

Two of Waterdeep's more noble families have extensive holdings in the Amphail area.

The Eagleshield family, which produces skilled animal tenders, maintains a farm where sick animals are nursed, and a shop where tack of the finest sort is made and sold. The Eagleshield harness is made for the lone rider's mount. It is of black leather, adorned with silver-plated studs bearing the spread-winged eagle that is the heart of the family blazon.

The Ammakyl family makes more money than all other inhabitants of Amphail combined. This clan dominates the chief business of Amphail: feeding Waterdeep. Any local vegetables that don't come out of Ammakyl





## Amphail

- 1. Elboar's Finest
- 2. Imbryl's Cloaks
- 3. Statue of the Great Shalarn
- 4. The Malanderways
- 5. The Stag-Horned Flagon
- 6. Shrunedalar's Secrets
- 7. Mother Gothal's
- 8. Maerlbar Eggs & Fresh Fowl
- 9. Eagleshield Fine Horse Leathers
- 10. Ammakyl Flowers and Foods

- 11. Halana Shauluth
- 12. Blodhlar's Wares
- 13. Hagala's Manyturrets
- 14. Golaund Sester's
- 15. Pelost Galathaer
- 16. The Stone Stallion
- 17. Well
- 18. Horse Pond
- 19. The Middens
- 20. The Old Dead Rowan



fields are purchased by the family at fair market prices and carted to Waterdeep in large, well-armed family caravans. These caravans are always on the road between Amphail and Waterdeep.

Amphail is a small but prosperous place, the sort of town a hurried traveler can ride through without noticing much of interest, thereby missing a great deal.

## Landmarks

Amphail covers hill after hill of rolling farm fields, but the settlement itself is quite small. The town is centered on an open space where the side streets meet the Long Road. This space is known as the Malanderways. It took its name from a butcher shop owned by the family Malander that used to stand on the corner. Sadly, the shop was destroyed by fire about a decade ago.

This open space is overlooked by a black stone statue of the Great Shalarn, a famous war stallion bred in Amphail 39 winters ago. Gelded long ago by a prankster, the rearing horse image is often painted various hues by high-spirited locals. There is a local rule that allows children to use slings, flung stones, or hand crossbows to bring down birds perching on the statue, so it remains free of the usual bird-droppings. The children often climb it themselves. and perch precariously in the high, tilted saddle, waving their arms and commanding imaginary armies into battle.

The statue is a popular place to leave cryptic messages, either tucked under the hind hooves, or slid between the sculpted curls of the tail. It's also a common place for arranged signals, which are usually a bit of colored cloth tied to a particular part of the horse.

Local lore holds that if the grim, ghostly figure of the ranger Yarobyn Longarm, a long-ago hero of Amphail, is ever seen in the saddle, war will soon come to the town.

For a local spot of interest, you might try the Horse Pond. It's a placid, muddy home to frogs and water-lilies, and it is said to hide the underwater entrance to a tomb. Local lore tells of the Maiden King, a female human chieftain who ruled here an age ago. According to the tale, she sleeps forever on a stone bed, with a magical two-handed sword on her breast. Adventurers have entered the pool several times looking for her sunken tomb, and at least one band did not return. Some years ago, a number of undead skeletons emerged from the pond and stalked through the village, strangling several folk before the beasts were hacked apart. The truth about what lies in the depths of the pond remains to be revealed. However, it is used daily, without incident, to water dirty, thirsty horses.

There's also the Old Dead Rowan, a leafless tree whose trunk is as large as some cottages. Its forked top serves the locals as a lookout to the north. The tree is a popular meeting place for locals, who sit on plank benches



under its bare boughs and smoke pipes, sip cider, play at dice, or just chat. Legend says that a sorceress of great power is buried under its roots, and her power keeps the tree from rotting. Supposedly, this power sometimes heals sick folk who sleep atop the trunk's fork. Locals swear that they've seen it happen.<sup>3</sup> Local law dictates that anyone caught chopping at the tree will receive the same number of axe blows that the culprit dealt it.

At the north end of the village stands the burned ruin of the Laughing Bandit Inn. It was destroyed in a wild spell battle three winters ago. The battle was between a mysterious masked mage whose skin was inkblack (some folk believe he was a drow) and the wizard Thalagh Tarn of Tethyr who was blasted to bloodspray. It's not clear if the other mage escaped the inferno of the inn. Many, many bones, cracked by the heat, were found in the ashes.

As the owner died in the conflagration, there is no great interest in rebuilding. Local children love to play in the ruins, where many "jools" of melted, puddled glass can be found. Somewhere under the charred timbers lie the inn's cellars, which may still contain some valuables. There's no way to get down there without doing a lot of digging that would have to be done in full view of the children and anyone passing on the road.

To the north is a disused temple to Waukeen. It is rapidly becoming overgrown with ivy and creeping vines. Nearby is the horse breeding ranch belonging to the retired adventuress Elraghona Selember—perhaps the most successful business of Amphail, after the Ammakyl farms. Elraghona supplies remounts to travelers up and down the Long Road. Her horses are distributed through inns such as the Sleeping Dragon in Rassalantar, which buys dozens of Selember horses each year.

As if all this wealth weren't enough, Amphailans all think the Waterdhavian nobles have chests upon chests of gold buried on Amphalian farms. Gossip I heard at parties in Waterdeep suggests that this rumor may be at least partially true.

## The Stag-Horned Flagon

Tavern

# iii oooo

This cozy timber-and-stone building is the only watering hole in Amphail. It's a handsome, if rather dark, tavern. This shouldn't be surprising, considering the wealth of the Water-dhavian nobles who drink here, and of those who come to buy horses from them. It is named for an ancient and battered drinking cup—a warrior's helm of unknown origin, with two antlers affixed to it—that hangs over the bar. The "Stag'n'Flag," as locals sometimes refer to it, enjoys an excellent reputation. Mirt the Money-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>According to the Old Mage, the tree does sometimes *cure disease* and *neutralize poison*, but no one knows why or if a sorceress is really buried there.



lender of Waterdeep called it "a safe place to get blind drunk in."

#### The Place

The Stag's cellar is of fieldstone, as is the lower half of the ground floor. The rest of the structure is timber, topped with a sloping turf roof. In summer, wildflowers grow up there, and travelers can sometimes see the staff aloft, cutting the grass.

Out back is a private luncheon bower, used many a summer night, and the tavern's extensive stables.

## The Prospect

Inside, the Stag is stoutly and simply furnished. Old, broken weapons, scythes, and yokes hang almost invisibly on the walls. The massive ceiling beams and posts are everywhere; and simple tables crowd among them. Drink is served in pewter flagons whose handles resemble antlers.

This cozy place is never empty, as elders whittle away the day playing dice and strategy games. However, the Stag is usually quiet. The thick walls seem to drink in sound, and voices are seldom raised. A hunting horn is sounded at the bar to mark the tapping of a new keg, or to signal closing time.

The tavern master is Kriwin Shamblestar, an old, soft-spoken man with silver hair and a beard. Stocky and spare of movements, Krivvin has an excellent memory for faces and the favored drinks that go with them. He has six young and beautiful serving-girls, and he has trained them all to be expert knifethrowers. <sup>4</sup> The tavern's beams bear the scars of their long hours of practice.

#### The Provender

The Stag serves an excellent selection of wine (though the purple, spicy local vintage known as *mushroom wine* is very much an acquired taste) and dark, dense barley beer known as *slaker*.

The only food served at the Stag is a sort of dark molasses-hardwheat biscuit. Platters of them are delivered with a pot of garlic butter (so good, my mouth waters just recalling it) and sprigs of parsley. It is not unusual to see these leafy greens bobbing up and down, forgotten, on the lips of powerful Waterdhavian nobles as they discuss horses.

#### The Prices

Wines, zzar, and sherries cost 7 cp to 4 gp per tallglass, ale is 1 cp per tankard, and slaker is 3 cp for each tankard.

Biscuits come by the platter (which holds about 16), at 2 cp. They're very filling. Many locals, in fact, bring their own fish fillets or slices of ham, and make this their daily meal.

<sup>\*</sup>Consider them all THACO 11 with thrown daggers (2 per round) while inside the Stag only. At least one of them can throw hard and fast enough to sever the wick of a falling candle before it can land in an oil pot.



#### Travelers' Lore

The Stag has a ward against all fire magic. It extends only around the tavern walls, and doesn't affect the bower or stables. It also has an interesting legend, celebrated in the yearly Rite of the Stag Lass. A maiden from Waterdeep (traditionally of noble blood) rides through Amphail clad in an antlered stag mask and a tunic and breeches of green. She dismounts north of the village and runs back, on foot, to the bar of the Stag. Along the way, village folk who see her give chase and fling goblets of water, soured wine, or old milk over her. When the lass reaches the bar of the Stag, she must drain the old antlered drinking cup, filled with the bitterest beer the tavern master can find. At the bottom of the cup is a beautiful piece of jewelry-hers to keep. A bath is brought for her, and while she bathes, the villagers drink her health. All beer poured to a villager or to the Stag Lass is free that dav.

This curious rite remembers a priestess of Mielikki, who dwelt in Amphail long ago. She could take the shape of a stag, and was one day hunted by ignorant visiting nobles. They pursued her even after she changed back to human shape. The lass fled through the village, her blood trailing from wounds the hunters had made. She died at the bar of the Stag, pleading for aid. By some accounts, the legendary figure was the goddess herself in disguise.

Legend holds that any worshipper of Mielikki who kisses the bar of the Stag can ask the goddess one question each year, and hear in their mind a clear answer from the Lady of the Forest. Many rangers and druids come to the Stag every year, and no one of Amphail ridicules anyone who bends to kiss the bar.

## The Stone Stallion

Inn

**!!!!** BBB

The only inn still existing in Amphail is one named after the horse statue at the center of the village. It's a large, modern place, built seven winters ago after a previous inn on the same site burned to the ground. The Stone Stallion has pleasant, if austere, tapestryhung rooms—and a dark history.

## The Place

The Stallion is always cool and gloomily lit. It can house a small army, as it has four floors of twenty rooms each, plus a cellar crammed with furniture. The place is often nearly empty, leaving sleepers in dark, deserted, and decidedly creepy surroundings. All rooms have canopied beds with side draperies, wall tapestries of woodland or countryside hunting scenes, and candlelanterns. Each room also has a curtained-off corner, home to a copper hip-bath. The stairs are steep, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>The legend, Elminster insists, is true.



the lobby small and unpretentious, with barely room for a desk before the stairs.

## The Prospect

Service in the Stallion is almost nonexistent. Unless you cause some sort of explosion, throw something down the stairs or out a window during daylight hours, or come and hammer on the desk, you'll be left alone. The proprietor, Thorn Tlassalune, sees this as "respecting everyone's privacy." According to local tales, this "privacy" extends to rival adventuring bands staging pitched battles on the fourth floor.

Certainly, ladies from Mother Gothal's (the local festhall) have been known to sneak in with their clients and use a room unnoticed. There are adventuring bands who prefer to stay here because they can practice with weapons in upper rooms without complaints. On the other hand, travelers are on their own. There's no one to protect you from thieves or worse creeping down the halls late at night.

Additionally, despite being recently built, the Stallion has a reputation of being haunted.

The innkeeper, however, ridicules such talk. "There're no ghosts in the Stallion—it's just idle talk by folks who don't like my music!" Thorn is a retired merchant from Amn who spends most of his time plucking at a lute. Meanwhile, his five strong, silent daughters cook and see to the linen.

#### The Provender

Meals are served in the rooms, which guarantees that the food will be lukewarm by the time it reaches you. The only morningfeast or high-sun-bite is toast and a wholesome but unseasoned beef and vegetable stew. (I improved mine by stirring pepper and a bottle of cheap red wine into it.)

Eveningfeast is a strict rotation of beef, mutton, and pork roasts (one sort per night, served in thick, fatty gravy, with greens in summer, and parsnips or potatoes in winter).

The fare is good, but Thorn's daughters never learned the first thing about spices or dressing things up. I brought an oversalted sausage out of my pack, just to balance the blandness. Dessert is an apple tart. This is good, but best eaten in the bath—one bite causes it to explode into crumbs, in all directions.

Potables include sherry, buttermilk sprinkled with cinnamon (odd, as they don't use any other spices), a weak red wine from someplace forgettable in Amn, a good, dry, sparkling white wine from the Dragon Coast, and good, rather nutty, local ale.

## The Prices

Rooms in the Stallion go for 1 gp per night, meal and bath included. There is no discount if you forego either. There is no tenday rate, and although stabling is included, feed for each mount is 3 cp extra. Your meal



includes a glass of whatever you prefer; extra drinks are 7 cp per glass or tankard, or 3 sp per bottle, regardless of your choice.

#### Travelers' Lore

The villagers say that Thorn has treasure buried under the inn, accompanied by the bodies of several thieves who thought they could relieve him of it.<sup>6</sup> He doesn't make enough running the inn, they claim, to keep its doors open.

Thorn escapes local censure because townsfolk think he's dealing with the Weeping Witch for them. The earlier inn burned down because of her, they whisper. They add that Thorn found its successor standing open and empty because of her as well.

The Weeping Witch is a strange sort of ghost. Most of the time, she's a silent apparition. She's a woman in dark robes and bare feet, long hair hiding her face, who strides along the halls, gliding in and out of rooms to look down on sleeping guests.

Sometimes she remains unseen but can be heard, sobbing faintly but uncontrollably somewhere nearby. And some of the time, locals whisper, she is as solid as you or I, walking the night to strangle her foes!

The Weeping Witch, the story goes, was a sorceress who lived long ago where Amphail now stands. She learned magic from powerful grimoires of fallen Netheril. She defended herself against orcs with spells that turned hares and foxes into monstrous beasts under her command.

One day, though, her betrothed came to visit. She mistakenly turned her beasts on him. Finding him slain, she fled from her magic, sobbing in remorse, and was promptly slain by watching orcs. Her spell books have never been found, and must still lie somewhere near. It is said that the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster's Note: The villagers are correct.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>The Old Mage tells us the local tale of the Weeping Witch is all so much dragonspit. The truth, according to him, is that the Witch is a sorceress named Phelansheene. She is under a curse that traps her on another plane except when the moon is full. For two nights before and after a full moon, she can, by force of will, see into Faerun and manifest as a phantom. She adopts the weeping woman form to scare folk away from the inn. Her only links to Faerun are her spell books, buried under the building, and she doesn't want anyone to find and bear them away, trapping her forever! Her scare tactics worked with the man who rebuilt the inn, one Tlost Rhuanthel (now deceased), but Thorn is different. He was curious, and spoke to her.

On nights when the moon is full, Phelansheene walks Faerûn like anyone else. She used to use such nights to seize scrolls and spell books from around the Realms to replenish her magic. Her own spell books are lost under heavy stones, and she dared not trust anyone to dig them up for her. She also used magic to slay or drive away those near the site of her hut (now the inn).

When she came to kill Thorn, though, he invited her to dine and tried to befriend her. She did not slay him, but sat with him and talked instead. In the years since his wife died, Thorn and Phelansheene have grown intimate. On nights when the moon is full, they dine together. She hasn't told him about her spell books, and he hasn't told his daughters about her. They think their father locks himself up to escape her when the moon is full. His daughters, meanwhile, go out dancing at Mother Gothal's until dawn.

The curse on Phelansheene was laid by a Red Wizard of Thay after she refused to yield her spell books to him. She was unable to force him to free her from the curse. Instead, she imprisoned him in a crystal ball that she has brought to the inn and hidden in a corner of the attic. Elminster says he'd have destroyed the Red Wizard long ago but for the danger of trapping Phelansheene forever. Now, the Stallion faces the ever-present danger of an angry Red Wizard of Thay (about a W20) getting free and blowing the place apart with everyone in it!



door of her hut was shaded by the same duskwood trees that now mark one end of the village.

## Mother Gothal's

Festhall

If the "Stag'n'Flag" (the local tavern) is the place to chat quietly and make deals, Mother Gothal's is the local spot to have fun. Yes, it is a place where ladies can be hired for an evening, but it's also where the whole village turns out to dance and listen to traveling minstrels. Those who want to revel can change their clothes for some ridiculous costumes of black cotton, mock lace, high ruffles, and masks. Wearing these onto the dance floor is an open invitation for nearby critics to comment on your singing, dancing, or small talk by dousing you with their glasses of "Mother's mead." If you think this sounds like a fun place to forget your cares for a night, you're right.

## The Place

Mother Gothal's is a tall old house with high arched windows, and many small, labyrinthine rooms.

There are pillared porches running around the outside on all three stories, and a set of stairs at the back. These are used at night by shy clientele. The steps are softly lit by fireflies trapped in glass globes set atop the stairposts.

The ground floor is devoted to a dance floor with a raised stage, with seats all around the outside. The seats are soft, and curtained off with silken drops and beaded curtains. There are no fewer than three staircases that climb to the rooms above. For some measure of privacy on the upper floors, dancing lights are used for lighting, while ghost pipes provide continuous background music.

## The Prospect

Folk come here for the company of ladies, who are always masked when on the ground floor or when out in the streets of the village. There are persistent rumors that some bored noblewomen of Waterdeep drop in to spend time among them, for fun.

Mother Gothal's is open all hours, and is ably managed by Mother Gothal herself, or her aide, a formidable warrior known only as Dlara. Mother Gothal is a tiny, frail old woman who clings to remnants of striking beauty, and sometimes takes to the stage to dance, clad only in her floor-length black hair. Her assistant, meanwhile, is an eight-foottall woman from the jungles of Chult. Dlara once broke up a fight outside the Stag by picking up two bullies and tossing them like rag dolls into their foes. There are also usually about two dozen of Mother Gothal's girls on call at any one time. They enjoy a good reputation among travelers, and many merchants arrange their affairs so as to stop by here regularly.





Spells (and, it is said, monsters) guard a vault in the cellars that can only be reached through Mother Gothal's bedroom. Any guest can leave all of his valuables in her keeping, secure in the knowledge that nothing will be stolen.<sup>8</sup>

Mother Gothal also owns a small cottage, a mile or so east of the fest-hall, on a side road among the farms. Her girls can go there for a rest from the festhall. They are forbidden to bring clients there, but they can entertain friends. Some Harpers have been seen slipping away from there,

so at least one of the girls is likely to be a Harper informant.

## The Provender

Mother Gothal's mead is honeyed wine with fruit juices added to give the flavor a twist. Much of it is hurled about on the dance floor and all over the dancers, but it's not bad on the tongue.

#### The Prices

Mead is 1 cp per glass, and an escort is 4 gp each visit or 7 gp for the night

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Mother Gothal and Dlara will both be alerted by any entry into the vault, because it is warded. Only they bear the keys, tiny silver triangles on their anklets. Spares are hidden in their bedposts. Two helmed horrors are linked to the ward, and they will attack intruders. There is a false crown of gilt and paste set on a shelf in the vault where someone descending the shaft can't fail to see it. Touching this crown will trigger a *hold person* spell and ring a gong. In the shaft itself is an open niche with a false handle at the back. If the handle is touched, a row of rusty blades will snap out of the wall to impale the thief (THACO 4, Dmg 4d4).



(includes safe storage of goods, free mead, and your own private bed, if you wish).

#### Travelers' Lore

This festhall was once the country house of Dalrosz Kothont, an eccentric old nobleman who had turned his back on the high society of Waterdeep and relocated here. His own family spurned him because of his interest in necromantic arts, so he lived out his days here alone, experimenting with captured outlaws and cadavers in a quest for immortality. He also experimented with augmentation of the human form, such as additional limbs, eyes added to the back of the head, and the like.

There are many gruesome tales of misshapen people with tentacles, extra arms, and the like, menacing passersby. After Dalrosz disappeared, a dozen or so of his experiments escaped to live in the hills nearby. Local rumor insists that their weird descendants still roam, preying on mountain animals and the occasional unlucky traveler.<sup>9</sup>

The house fell into the hands of an adventuring band from Waterdeep, the Five Ready Blades. They used it as their headquarters for only a season before they disappeared. Locals thought them to be still at home—their very hungry horses were found in the stables, and no one had seen them leave—but they had vanished!

Some villagers think that the adventurers were killed by Dalrosz. They believe that he still lurks in cellars somewhere under the house. Others suggest that he did not find immortality at all, but became a lich, and lured the five unfortunate adventurers into undead servitude.

The truth remains unknown. It is also rumored that the Five found a gate or other magical teleport to another place from which they haven't yet returned, or where they met their dooms. <sup>10</sup> There are also rumors of people vanishing from Mother Gothal's, and of nobles appearing there who were seen in Waterdeep a short time before, but weren't seen on the road. It's possible that these folk made use of a *teleport* service run by certain mages in Waterdeep.

## Other Places of Interest in Amphail

## Shops

Ammakyl Flowers and Foods Produce Shop

Ammakyl's expands into an awningcovered stall in summer and fall, catering to travelers. They sell excellent trail baskets of carefully chosen vegetables, and wooden skewers of sliced vegetables dipped in gravy, meant for frying over a fire.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Elminster says these tales are true; a tribe of at least a dozen of these "wild things" still exists. Treat them as mongrelmen (detailed in MC2), although some have tentacles and other features that give them greater powers.

<sup>10</sup>Elminster hinted this slyly.



They're 4 cp each, but they're delightful!

In winter, this shop imports fruit and vegetables from the Shining South, and sells them to locals and travelers alike at high prices in the summer and fall, and exorbitant prices in the winter and spring.

## Blodhlar's Wares Hardware



This is a ramshackle shop that looks like a barn about to fall down, which it may well be. They sell nails, damaged kegs (bought cheap from the docks of Waterdeep and then resealed), fence posts, wire, rope, slats, crates, and gate hinges. There's a good selection, and the prices are moderate.

#### Eagleshield Fine Horse Leathers Tack Store



This is a large, professional shop where pleasant young men sell saddles, reins, and other tack designed for the single rider. Whips and leather breeches are available, but boots must be bought elsewhere. This shop prefers to custom-make gear for the truly wealthy, but even off-the-peg harness is dear indeed. You will find a wide selection of excellent goods, but the prices are very high. This is a store for adventurers and the foolishly wealthy only.

## Elboar's Finest Winery

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Elboar's is a dark, wood-paneled wine, spirits, spices, and sauces shop. The selection is fair, and prices are moderate to high.

# Halana Shauluth's Bakery

1 1 5 5

Halana is a retired adventuress, a warrior who fought as a mercenary alongside a dozen dwarven women. After she lost a hand to gangrene following a battle, she came home and opened this bakery. She sells round, dark brown hardwheat loaves that stand up very well on the trail (2 cp each), and small buns with chopped meat stew cooked into their centers, a delicacy to equal anything anywhere (three for 1 sp or 4 cp each). Halana has a small selection of good wares, and her prices are moderate to high.

## Imbryl's Cloaks Garment Maker

3 8 8

Imbryl's is a dingy place where local women gather to talk, sip wildflower wine, and make cloaks, smocks, simple tunics, and breeches. The women also make the large-brimmed, shapeless hats, known locally as "rainspouts." Imbryl herself is a short, fat, broad-shouldered woman with a merry manner, a nose like an axe-



blade, and glossy, gleaming black hair. She can alter garments to fit, but prefers to sell them as is. She typically tells those requesting alterations that the work will take at least three days. If the patron agrees to wait, and pays the fee of at least 4 sp up front, the work will actually take only a day. She has a fair selection of poorly finished though serviceable garments. Her prices are moderate, but alterations are expensive.

# MaerlbarEggs&FreshFowl Fowler



This is a shop full of sawdust, blood, and stinks, where the thin, whining proprietor and his fat, whining wife sell eggs and geese, ducks, chickens, turkeys, and pheasants. All of the birds are available live, plucked, or light-roasted. Over the counter is a little bamboo cage that contains a golden-hued songbird that Maerlbar swears is "a Red Wizardess of Thay, trapped by spells into the shape ye see her now." I've heard countless such tales, but the look the bird gave me as I chuckled made me think there may be some truth to this claim. There's a fair selection, but it's not very clean. Prices are low to moderate.

# Pelost Galathaer's Carpenter

Pelost has been in Amphail all of his life, taking over his father's shop

some forty winters ago. His signboard says "beds repaired, furniture sold, sledge-runners a specialty," and it doesn't lie. This salty-tongued, aging craftsman doesn't have the skill to repair wagons or wheels, so he buys all of the broken wagons he can find, keeping the wheels to sell to desperate travelers for as much as 20 gp each. He does good work, as long as the finish doesn't matter to you. Prices are low to moderate, except for those wheels

#### Shrunedalar's Secrets Boutique



This place is popular with local ladies, and with merchants' wives on the way into Waterdeep, who want to freshen up after a long journey. Its perfumed air was so thick that I could scarcely stay long enough to look around. The fat, soft-fingered Ulreth Shrunedalar and his silent. skilled sons and daughters offer hair-bathing and cutting, body painting, and makeup application. Fat women shrouded in steaming towels seem to be everywhere, and they give any male who enters the place looks that could pierce the most stout armor.

Shrunedalar also sells perfumes, fashion accessories, and gowns that are no longer quite in fashion in Waterdeep. He has a good selection of services, but the prices are very high. Things cost even more here than in the City of Splendors itself.



# Ulvinhand Smithy Smith



West of the ruins of the Laughing Bandit inn, down a side-track, stands the home and forge of the tall, bearded finesmith Akrosz Ulvinhand. He is said to be the equal of any smith in Waterdeep, and therefore, he's among the best human smiths in all the Sword Coast lands. There is a steady stream of strange visitors down the track to his forge, but he undertakes only those commissions that interest him. Local gossip says that his selected commissions include many blades that are later enchanted by wizards. An Ulvinhand blade might cost you as little as 100 gp, or as much as 700, not counting the cost of any adornments, such as gems.

#### lnns

#### Golaund Sester's



Golaund's is a large, exclusive rooming house, renting rooms out at 5 sp per person per night with bath included and complimentary mulled, spiced cider. No food is available, but a laundress and tailor can repair and clean clothing for 1 gp per garment. This place is often used by wealthy merchants and nobility on the way to trysts or hunts. It's not unusual to come face-to-face on the stair with a young Waterdhavian miss in a gown of the sort commonly called "I-dare-you-I-really-do," or to brush

shoulders with an arrogant trainingmage or fat merchant in the entry hall.

#### Hagala's Manyturrets



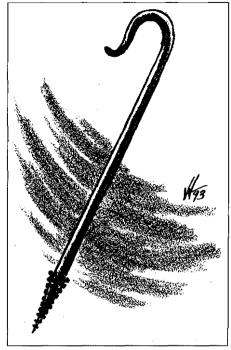
This is an old, rambling, drafty rooming house that obviously used to be quite grand. Rooms rent by the night at 1 sp per person per night, or 8 sp per tenday. The rate includes no meals, but hot soup and cold ale are always available, at 1 cp for a bowl or tankard.

# Bargewright Inn

This community of about 35 folk has become an important base for visitors to the North, but isn't even a hamlet. It was formerly a lone wayside inn on a natural hill overlooking Ironford on the River Dessarin. Persistent brigand attacks made the proprietor, Feston Bargewright, decide to fortify the hill. He looked for someone to share the cost. To this end, he persuaded several Waterdhavian merchants, tired of guild politics and fees, to relocate. They did so, surrounding his inn and the slopes of the hill with businesses of use to caravan travel. On good summer nights, Bargewright Inn may have a temporary population of close to 750.

Agents of the Lords of Waterdeep and the Harpers both keep sharp eyes on Bargewright Inn, because the Zhentarim have been trying to buy into it for some years now. They hope to gain control of the ford, and even-





tually, the farms that lie to the north of the Inn, on the west bank of the Dessarin. Meanwhile, the useful businesses here make Bargewright Inn a haven for travelers in the North.

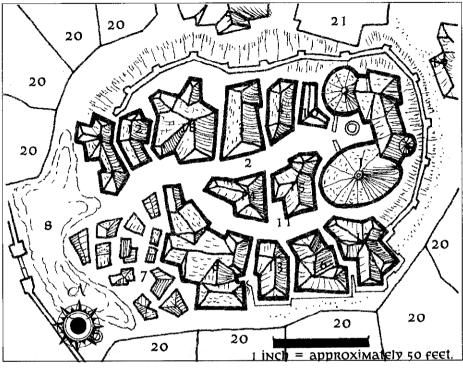
From a distance, this place looks like a ramshackle castle. One sees a hill topped by two towers—one tall and thin, the other shorter, thicker, and leaning at an angle. There are buildings straggling down the slopes of the hill, and the whole lot is encircled by two concentric walls. Around the bottom of the hill are paddock areas, enclosed by a second, outer wall. Caravans encamp here, and drovers pen their stock for sale or for nighting over on a run to Waterdeep. The inn stables are also here.

The single set of gates is the only way in, excepting rope-chairs lowered over the walls from some of the houses. This is done at night for very stiff fees, typically 4-6 gp per use. The moment you enter those gates, you face a wide expanse of trampled dirt and cow-dung, piled at the start of a road that winds up the hill. This place is known, prosaically enough, as "the Mud." Facing you are two gatewardens, unsmiling people who hold crook-topped staves. They'll ask your business, and satisfy themselves that vou're not an orc in disguise. Then, they'll outline the features of the place, and direct you where you want to go. This only takes them a moment. If you get an idea that there's not much of interest in this austere place, you're right.

The lower part of Bargewright Inn consists of the circle of paddocks between the two walls. The overwhelming smell here is that of fresh manure. Carted out daily to nearby farms at a 1 cp per cart fee, the manure comes from the livestock brought for market, and from caravan beasts and travelers' mounts. The paddocks each hold about 40 beasts if they're crowded in. They rent for 5 cp per day (highsun to highsun). Nearby are the Stalls. Here, local farmers come to sell their fresh produce. They can rent an awning, a bench, a full water bucket, and a table for 1 cp per day.

Around the north side of the hill are the stables. These are linked to the inn itself by a rickety rope-lift elevator, and some rather treacherous





## Bargewright Inn

- 1. The Bargewright Inn
- 2. The Rise
- **3.** Belvyn's House of Good Cheer
- **4.** Shondrin's Packsack of Plenty
- 5. The Wet Crossing
- 6. Rinthar's Wagonworks
- 7. The Stalls
- 8. The Mud
- 9. Haeleth's Horseshoes
- **10.** Ruldarr's Pipes, Locks, Tobacco, and Fine Furniture

- 11. The Back
- 12. House of Belvyn
- 13. House of Halduth Meer
- 14. House of Shondrin
- 15. House of Rinthar
- 16. House of Haeleth
- 17. House of Ruldarr
- 18. Tabra's
- 19. The Healing House
- 20. Rental Paddock
- 21. Inn Stables



steps that zig-zag up the rocky north face of the hill. Of course, you can also take the long way around, via the street.

The stablemaster, Aldon Barge-wright, leads a militia of five hostelers and 20 shopkeepers, all armed with pikes, should Bargewright Inn face a troll, orc or brigand raid. Any adventurers in town at the time would be asked to join the defenders. For their service, each would receive 1 gp, and freedom from all inn fees for the next tenday.

From the Mud, a single street climbs the spine of the hill. It is lined with shops, ending in the courtyard of the Bargewright Inn at the hill's top. A second street angles away from the first to run precariously along an edge of the hill. This street serves the homes of the inhabitants. Several of these homes perch on pillars, bridging over the livestock path below. This provides the drovers with shelter when it rains.

Bargewright Inn has two wells. One is a deep well in the courtyard of the inn itself, atop the hill. The other is a covered and locked well in the paddock area on the south side of the hill. From this well, water is pumped into troughs at a fee of 1 cp per trough.

The merchants of Bargewright Inn carry staves that have a distinctive metal crook on one end, and a studded metal goad on the other. Disobeying a person carrying such a staff inside the walls of Bargewright Inn is grounds for immediate expulsion.

This is not a big place. One can survey its attractions thoroughly in half a day—and pity the person who has to stay here longer than two nights.

## Places of Interest in Bargewright Inn

## Shops

Haeleth's Horseshoes Smith

555

Haeleth's is the dark, crowded smithy of a tall, laconic ironworker who specializes in shoeing all manner of beasts. Haeleth has worked with copper and silver, but is uncomfortable dealing with finer metals. Stout ironmongery is his love and his forte. When he's not shoeing mounts, he keeps busy making hooks, hinges, and hasps that he ships to the markets of Waterdeep by the cart load. All of his money goes into buying Waterdhavian properties. The rent from these keeps his wife comfortable in a Waterdhavian villa, and his four sons sponsored in adventuring careers all over Faerûn. Thieves have often gone through Haeleth's shop (the smith is a sound sleeper, whose snores can often be heard in the Rise outside through multiple closed doors and shuttered windows) but have never found more coinage than a handful of coppers. Haeleth has a pet lizard of unknown species that looks like a smaller cousin of the basilisk, but has no demonstrated petrification powers.



# The Healing House Physic

This is the home and office of a local physic and animal healer, Chanczlatha Luruin. He uses more herbs and broths than magic in his treatments, 11 typically charging 5 gp per visit or 6 gp for a day and night of continuous care.

His wife, Baerlatha, and a large number of adopted children assist Chanczlatha in his home, and in running one of the paddocks in the lower circle. His paddock is a place where sick animals are tended, and one can always sell sick, weary, or nolonger-needed mounts for 5 sp or take a chance on buying a mount on the mend for 8 sp, though this price can sometimes be bargained down for particularly small or sorry-looking beasts.

#### Rinthar's Wagonworks Wheelwright

This is the workplace of an aging, gruff craftsman who seldom speaks. He can often be seen out in his yard, though, steaming and bending pieces of ash to fashion the plain, stout wheels for which he is best known (15 gp each or 25 gp for a pair). Besides being a skilled wheelwright, Rinthar fixes wagons. He and his six young apprentices specialize in rough but sturdy repairs. These are quick and expensive (30 gp per wagon for by-

sunset or next-morning repairs), or slower and more reasonable (10 gp per day). Rinthar is something of an authority on wood, and can identify woods of great age or rarity. More importantly, he can perform the proper weatherproofing treatments on them.

# Ruldarr's Pipes, Locks, Tobacco, and Fine Furniture

Tobacconist/Furnisher

This is the aromatic, dimly lit shop of the urbane Ruldarr. You'll find him to be a man of smooth manners and subtle jests, with his small pointed beard and oiled mustache. Ruldarr's shop smells of fine, exotic woods, and a variety of tobacco. The shop is crowded with beautiful, ornately carved furniture, including a cellar full of coffins and strongchests. Bins of tobacco sell steadily (2 cp to 1 sp per pouch, depending on the ingredients). However, Ruldarr's chief business is in the sale of padlocks. He also has a case of "found" keys that presumably fit ancient locks in ruins somewhere in the North. Brought to Ruldarr by adventurers, these are for sale at 6 gp each to other adventurers who hope to find the locks they fit, and, presumably, the treasure beyond. Many of Ruldarr's furniture pieces have hidden drawers, but he hides his money somewhere else. There are allegedly secret compartments in the dozen interior pillars that hold up the roof of his

<sup>114&</sup>quot;To some success," according to Elminster.



shop. At least one of these is known to be fitted with a trap that causes a dagger blade to spring out of it. This rumor was confirmed when a wouldbe thief was found impaled on it one morning.

An old, battered scythe hangs on one pillar. Local talk says that it becomes animate at Ruldarr's will, defending him against anyone foolish enough to attack him in his shop.

Ruldarr is an avid gardener. His house is full of hanging plants that grow in large pots that levitate wherever Ruldarr wants them to. Sometimes, they drift in slow orbits around a room, trailing their fronds and roots behind them. Some of these plants seem to have developed a taste for the rather exotic wines Ruldarr likes to serve his guests. One of his favorites is the black wine of Phelzol, which one sprinkles with salt before each sip. It's particularly strong and bitter; some would say vile. However, someone wanting to surreptitiously empty his glass into a plant may discover that four or five plants are suddenly jostling for position at his elbow!

#### Shondrin's Packsack of Plenty General Store

This is a small, crammed shop. Its fat, jolly proprietor spins endless, wild tales of his career as a sailor up and down the Sword Coast. Shondrin sells dry goods and practical sundries, from outerwear to rope and candles.

He prides himself on knowing the nearest source of whatever you might want to buy that he doesn't carry. Of course, an answer of Waterdeep, or Athkatla, or Calimport, may not be of much use to you, but you can trust Shondrin's knowledge of lawful, open-market vendors to be as thorough and as up-to-date as he can make it. Shondrin sells things at just a shade above the common market price. 12 He sometimes even takes items such as old weapons, armor, and hardware, in trade. You never know what you'll find in "The Sack." However, Shondrin seldom deals in magical things. Nevertheless, I once found a bag of holding there that looked like a fat dragon statuette, whose head swung back to allow access. I've also heard of travelers buving an old blade, and gaining a magical sword with strange, unknown powers.

#### Tavern

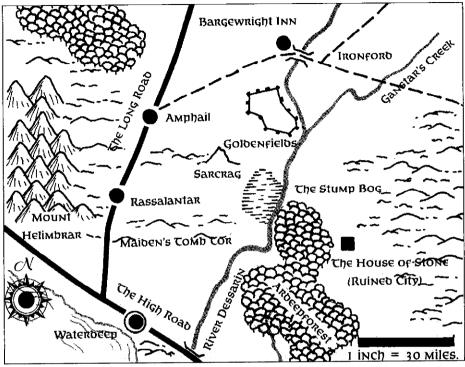
#### The Wet Crossing



This is the only tavern in town. Its original proprietor was the ferryman on the old, leaking boat that crossed the Dessarin here before the Ironford bridge was built. Once the new bridge opened, the ferryman brought his boat ashore, where its unlovely prow and leaping-fish figurehead now provides the tavern's facade. Though the original owner died soon after opening the tavern,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Prices as given in the Player's Handbook.





his old friends now run the tavern for his widow. They continue the tradition of loud, boisterous singing and dancing for which the ferryman was legendary.

Prices here are 1 cp per tankard of beer and 2 cp per tallglass of wine (a rough but good dry white and a truly horrible, reeking red). Drinking here can be an ear-splitting tumult of stomping feet and shouted revelry. Many friends are made in the Crossing, but those who would do business or discuss things must often scramble outside to hear themselves think. Regardless, a surprising amount of the North's trade is conducted here, to the good-natured background din of the Crossing.

#### INN

## The Bargewright Inn

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Feston Bargewright's inn is the center of this community. It's an efficient, no-frills place of fine wood paneling and swift service. Strict order is kept by four strong warrior-types, while the inn's stables are run by Feston's brother Aldon Bargewright. Aldon is a ranger who captains the local militia, and wields a long sword reputed to be magical.

Private rooms at the inn go for 1 gp per person per night, including a bath. A chambermaid is 1 gp extra. She helps you with your bath, rubs



your back and feet if so asked, and (a charming touch, this) tells a brief bedtime tale or local legend! One can also share a double room for 5 sp per person, or a wardroom of 6 to 18 bunks for 2 sp per person.

All room rates include a talltankard (a pewter monster with a lid that holds about twice what a normal tankard does) of rather watery ale, and a platter of biscuits and pickles. The latter are so salty, they send you scurrying for real food. This tends to be pork and beef roasts of the hearty but plain variety, accompanied by heaps of turnips, potatoes, radishes, and parsnips. Those who dine at the inn are saved from total boredom by the presence of a good cheese tray, and, in winter, a hearty vegetable and root sauce soup. This is the only meal available at the inn. It is served from lunch to moondown (midnight, regardless of what the moon's actually doing). The cost is 5 cp per head. Drinks are extra. Available beverages include various beers at 1 cp for each tankard (a normal-sized tankard this time) and a dry clear wine at 4 cp per tallglass. Curiously, the inn also offers the chilled green wine of Mintarn-very much an acquired taste—at 7 cp for a tallglass or 1 sp for a bottle (I suspect Feston likes it himself). Sherry is also available, at the same price as the Mintarn.

The view from the uppermost turrets of the inn is impressive. The taller North Tower and the slightly leaning and much larger South Tower overlook the rolling grasslands of the Dessarin. All in all, it's a safe but unspectacular place, with the air of a castle preparing for war. Every winter, Feston has more of the wooden parts of the inn torn down, and replaced with stonework. Soon, it'll look just like a castle, too.

#### Festhalls

# Belvyn's House of Good Cheer Festhall and Temple



Belvyn's House is a tall, narrow, steeply roofed hall with catwalk galleries running along its high crossbeams. Belvyn, a sly, belly-rubbing rogue if ever I saw one, rents it out for 25 gp per night. It has two major functions. It may be used as a festhall, or as a temple. For the latter use, a plain altar and braziers are provided to worshipers of any nonviolent faith. Exceptions include worship of Tempus and Helm, which are permitted, but that of Malar is not.

Various organizations rent out the house to throw parties. This is most often done by merchant cabals or leagues, Waterdhavian guilds on frolic, or adventuring bands celebrating a success. These renters often hire most of the girls from Tabra's for the night. Funerals are also held here, free of charge.

There's a persistent local rumor telling of chests and chests of gold coins hidden in or under the House. However, it's a simple, open place, easily searched, and no one has ever found so much as an extra copper piece here.



#### Tabra's

# \* \* \*

Tabra's is known, even in Waterdeep, as one of the "must visit" places in the North. It's a tall, many-balconied house furnished with shabby gentility. Rooms rent for 2 gp per night, with all meals included. The fare is simple, but always delicious. You can order leek-and-leftovers soups (vegetable, meat, and cheese chunks), oysters and mushrooms on toast, or spiced scrambled eggs. Tenants are always hanging around the kitchens. The place is home to never fewer than a dozen lady escorts, who you can hire for 25 gp each from highsun to highsun. Their chief attraction is their relaxed friendliness. As one regular, a female merchant who simply ignores all the kissing and cooing around her, puts it, Tabra's "feels like home." There are always folk to sit and chat with, or several ongoing gambling games. There are quiet window-seats where one can curl up to read one of Tabra's huge collection of books, chapbooks, and scrolls on every topic, except magic. Tabra even provides a weapons practice room in the cellars, and a magically shielded conference room at the top of the house, next to her own rooms.

Tabra herself is a kind, motherly, blond little wisp of a thing. She looks like a little girl too young to be thinking of men—until one looks at her eyes. Presumably, she does this by magic, a topic she pretends to know nothing about. Tabra has been around the North for as long as

Elminster can remember, and that's long indeed. There are rumors that Tabra is really a gold dragon, in human shape to guard a hoard hidden under her house. When one wonders why she's never been seen in dragon form, the usual answer is that she's hiding from a more powerful dragon who would sweep down and destroy her and Bargewright Inn if her true identity ever slipped out.

One of the tales told around Bargewright Inn is of a time, a decade or more ago, when a black dragon swept down out of the sky to attack Bargewright Inn. Tabra allegedly leapt from the balcony of her bedroom, turned into a dragon in midair, and drove off the black dragon. Strangely, the tellers of this tale can never agree just what type of dragon Tabra turned into.

This story is never told in Tabra's hearing. If it is, her usual softly furious reaction is to turn the speaker out of her house.

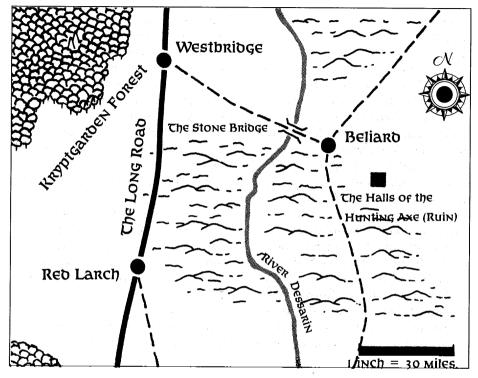
## Beliand

This small, tree-cloaked village stands east of the Stone Bridge, where the trail from Westbridge meets the trail coming north from Ironford.

Beliard is a market town for local cattle drovers, complete with a covered well free for anyone to use. Rather than setting up ranches, farmers build their houses in Beliard, and wander the nearby moors and rolling grasslands with their herds.

From time to time, folk disappear





in or near Beliard. Recently, four spice merchants vanished. 13

## Places of Interest in Beliard

## Shops

Halamar's Horses Stabler

8 8 8

At the east end of Beliard is a stable known as Halamar's Horses. A stout, white-bearded, retired warrior named Blasko Halamar runs the stables with the aid of a dozen boys. 14 Blasko does a steady trade here, buying tired or lame mounts and draft animals, and selling fresh, rested replacements. He's full of tales about adventurers, orc ambushes, and treasure. 15 His favorite treasure tale is of riches buried nearby an age ago by effete ladies fleeing the fall of Netheril. He sells mounts for 25 gp each and draft animals, such as oxen and mules for 20 gp each. If you're trading up for a fresh animal, he'll buy yours for 12 gp, and then sell to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>A doppleganger in town is responsible for this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>The stable boy who uses the name Hagarl is actually a doppleganger. It preys on horses, dogs, and the weakest travelers camped near Beliard. Its "kill pit" is at the north end of the village's garbage dump. There it dumps corpses it hasn't had time to eat. It also hurls bones and treasure there, covering them with a layer of garbage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Most of them true, or not far wrong, Elminster says.



you for 10 gp more. Whatever deals are made, he'll try to keep a 10 gp spread between payments and prices.

# Milshoun's Stronghouses Warehouses

5 5 5 5 5

Three squat stone warehouses stand across an open area from the well. Warehouse space can be rented by the night, tenday, or month for 10 gp per chest, 50 gp per chest, or 125 gp per chest, respectively. The warehouses are run by Ahbhaer Mhilshoun, <sup>16</sup> an oily little Calishite who constantly complains about the cold. His "stronghouses" have a standing guard of a dozen men-at-arms, who spend their spare time hunting game in the nearby hills to the north.

#### INN

## The Watchful Knight

The inn in Beliard has 16 rooms. It's a rough place indeed, built of logs and as cold as a drafty tomb in winter. The hostel is run by Arachar Calatharr, who is the namesake of, but no relation to, the famous ranger Arachar Calatharr. Arachar becomes intensely irritated whenever anyone

asks if he's related to "the real one."

The Watchful Knight has a central hall with a massive chimney at either end, and two floors of rooms opening onto internal balconies that overlook the hall. A suit of empty full plate armor stands in the center of the hall, facing the front door. It can animate to defend the inn or Arachar, at the innkeeper's silent mental command. At bedtime, the noise from the shared hall makes it very likely that you'll spend a "watchful night."

## Calling Horns

Inn

ttt bubu

South of the Evermoors, the trail from Dead Horse Ford meets the trail that links Yartar and Everlund. The two trails converge in an area of lightly wooded, rolling hills. The exact spot is marked by a cairn of weathered and lichen-covered orc skulls that commemorates the longago slaughter of a horde here. Overlooking this point is a hogback ridge, topped by a low, massive fieldstone inn and its stables.

This isolated inn bears the name Calling Horns. It takes its name from a battle that took place nearby, long ago. During this legendary battle,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Ahbhaer pretends to be a powerful person with many connections in Waterdeep and Calimport. He'll try to make you believe he's an exiled satrap or part of a secret group of magically powerful beings. In reality, he's a failed merchant who got hold of what magic he does have by killing a sleeping wizard and snatching everything valuable he could find. Ahbhaer wears a spellbattle ring (see Appendix III) and a ring of magic missiles (identical to a wand of magic missiles). When the ring's 24 remaining charges are gone, it will crumble to dust.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>The animated suit of armor is a helmed horror, detailed in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set. It is Int 14; AL N; AC 2; MV 12, F112 (A); HD 4+ 14; hp 46; THACO 12; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (battle axe: 1d8, two-handed sword: 1d10,3d6 vs. L) or 1d4 (fist); SA None; SD immune to fireball, heat metal, and lightning bolt magics, can see invisible to 120'; MR special; SX M (6' tall); ML special; XP 2,000.





humans and dwarves united to defeat the last real troll army.

Calling Horns is run by Tosker Nightsword, a retired hunter and guide. He kindly took the time to personally provide me with the history of his inn. 18

Calling Horns was originally built as the hunting lodge of a family called Zoar. These folk were once powerful Waterdhavian nobles, but they are now outlaws. There are persistent rumors of the Zoars using the inn as a base. These rumors suggest that the family is trying to regain its former control in the City of Splendors. However, there is no evidence to justify this, as the surviving Zoars seem to dwell mainly in Amn.

After the fall of the Zoars, various noble families used the lodge as they pleased, until a wandering wizard took up residence in the place. This clever wizard used his spells to dupe the next two families who showed up. His deception was not discovered for a long time. Instead, the lodge was thought of as haunted, so it was left alone.

The wizard, Balbannon, took over the lodge. While living there, he studied the magic of summoning and commanding creatures from other planes. He succeeded beyond his powers, and was torn apart by a babau tanar'ri. The creature then took over the lodge as its own abode. For many years, it preyed on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>According to Elminster, every word of this is accurate.



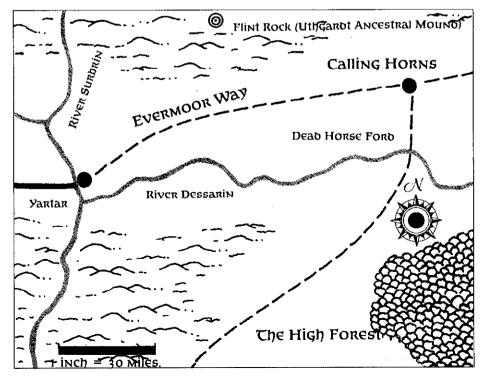
travelers, and creatures of the nearby High Forest.

After many years, the tanar'ri was destroyed by the Bright Blade Held High, an adventuring band of half-elves. These folk used the lodge as their base for almost a decade before they disappeared into the depths of the High Forest.

The vacant lodge was then used by a succession of brigands, monsters, and orc raiding bands, until a dwarven adventuring band from Sundabar moved in. This group was known as the Axe of Thunder. They found some ore nearby, but before they located any real riches, an orc horde swept down out of the north and slaughtered them all.

The lodge was thereafter taken over by a human band of adventurers who called themselves the Bored Swords. All the members of this party were idle sons and daughters of noble Waterdhavian birth. They enjoyed much success finding ruins in the North, but they grew tired of having to fight their way into their own abode each time they returned. It seems that persistent brigands continually came looking for the treasure that the noble adventurers must have found.

So, the Bored Swords hired their friend Tosker to run the lodge as an inn. They soon simply gave him the place. Their treasure is certainly hidden somewhere in or near the





inn, and they may never return to claim it. The Swords went deep into the High Forest last winter, telling Tosker little. They did mention that they'd found a ruined city cloaked in a field of magic, similar to the mythal that surrounds Myth Drannor. Apparently, they hoped to find powerful magic there. They still haven't returned, and with each passing day, the likelihood of their return diminishes.

The inn has a slate roof and very thick stone walls. Cellars, kitchens, and a lower floor of rooms are dug into the south face of the ridge. The rooms of the inn are arranged in a single row. The doors of the rooms all open onto a single wide passage. The passage wall opposite the doors is broken only by a series of arrow-slit windows. The watchtower at the inn's eastern end overlooks the stables. A large feasting hall lies at the west end, with meeting rooms and grand suites let into the hill below it.

Furnishings are sparse, but of the best taste and quality. Magical *drift-lights* dispel the gloom of the belowground areas. The luminance of these flying spheres of radiance is controlled by your will. They can even be made to trail after you like a faithful dog.

Rooms go for 4 sp to 4 gp per night, depending on its size. This includes three meals and unlimited watered ale and iced well-water. Meals consist of rolls, greens, and cold meat or fish at highsun, and stew in the evening.

Beer is sold by the tankard for 3 cp each. You can choose between a nutty-tasting ale and a very dark, strong-tasting stout, both brewed at the inn. Other drinks are sold by the bottle for 1 sp and up, with a good selection of zzar, sherries, and wines.

Those wanting the "grand even-feast" can pay 1 gp extra each night to gorge themselves on roast oxen, boar, venison, turkey and wildfowl soup, spiced greens, and potatoes flamed in sherry. When the hunting is good, this is supplemented by spits of seared pheasant, quail, grouse, or other wildfowl.

Tosker has a staff of three old, sharp-witted and sharp-tongued women, and a dozen young maids. All are equally at home in the kitchens or the stables, or out with a sword or bow, slaying orc raiders with cool efficiency. <sup>19</sup>

## Conyberry

This small farming village is one of many that shelter on forest edges or nestle in foothills around the edge of the Dessarin. It is mainly famous as home to the Ghost of Neverwinter Wood.

Conyberry itself is nothing more than a dozen or so houses standing in a cluster on the eastern edge of Neverwinter Wood. Adjoining farms spread out to the east and south, divided by a cart track that runs to distant Triboar.

The folk of Conyberry cut trees from the wood as needed. They hunt

 $<sup>^{19}</sup>$ Elminster says Tosker has imbibed at least one *potion of longevity*. The three crones, he adds, are all Tosker's wives and the dozen maids his daughters.



in the fringes of the wood, and snare rabbits and the like in the grassy plains south of their farms. They also grow crops to feed themselves, and to trade with any travelers who come their way. They are largely self-sufficient, needing to purchase only linens and finished clothing from peddlers. At night, the farmers take turns keeping watch from the rooftops of their homes. They arm themselves with scythes, daggers, swords, and crossbows. They are very good shots.<sup>20</sup>

Although trolls and brigands lurk in the hills to the south of Conyberry, skirting the hills is the fastest way from the interior to the coast. Because of this, there is a steady passage of travelers, except in the harshest winter months. Harsh winter conditions are known as "wolf weather" in Conyberry, because the wolves grow hungry and come down to the village to raid for food.

Conyberry has a smithy of sorts, several rough-and-ready carpenters, a person who can fix harnesses and tend to minor equine and livestock injuries, and two brewers who ferment their own horrible beer.

#### Landmarks

The chief landmark in the Conyberry area is a grove that is the haunt of a ghost. The ghost of Neverwinter Wood is actually a banshee, known as Agatha. This name is almost certainly a corruption of the elven surname Auglathla, which means Winterbreeze in one of the older elven dialects. She lairs in a grove in Neverwinter Wood, northwest of Conyberry. Her haunt is at the end of a path whose entrance is marked by a stand of birch trees.

Agatha's lair used to be guarded by a *magic mirror* spell. This was set up to hide her real location, and give her time to hurl spells at intruders. These defenses were shattered by the heroes Drizzt Do'Urden and Wulfgar, son of Beornegar. The two adventurers then stole her treasure.<sup>21</sup>

The banshee had amassed her treasure hoard by thieving in the night, slaying travelers, and pillaging old tombs and ruins. Since her wealth was stolen, she has taken to looting the Dessarin again, trying to rebuild her riches. She also seeks revenge for the theft, and so considers any adventurers fitting recipients of death.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Conyberry can muster about 140 able-bodied F1s (6-8 hp each, THACO 20), due to the labor-intensive nature of their farming. Consider them to have THACOs of 16 with bows (and, by day, slings) inside their village, where they're well practiced in hitting particular spots. When hunting outside the village, they have THACOs of 17 with the same weapons.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>As related in Chapter 3 of R.A. Salvatore's novel *The Halfling's Gem* (TSR, Inc., 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Agatha may be encountered anywhere in the Dessarin region. However, she will avoid confrontations when in cities. She will also refrain from attacking if she believes that powerful wizards or priests may be nearby. She appears as an elven maiden, clad in a flowing, swirling gown. Her skin is shriveled though, and her eyes look white, empty, and blind. However, she can see quite well. In addition to the usual powers of a banshee (see MC2), she retains the mastery of magic she had in life.

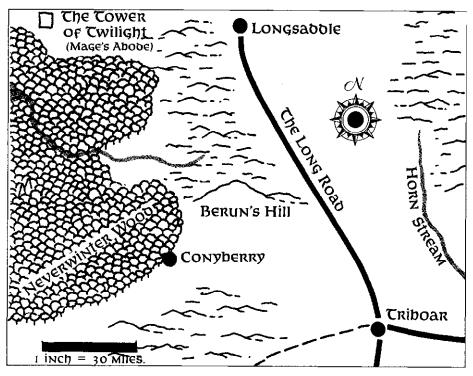
Agatha is a W13 (5,5,5,4,4,2). She never leaves Neverwinter Wood without a strong roster of fighting spells. One of her favorite combat spells is *lightning bolt*. She is constantly on the lookout for new spell books and magical items. Her spell books lie hidden in several places, though none are in her lair. Agatha's intangibility makes many of these useless, except for their trading value. Nevertheless, she is experimenting with *spell trigger* magic to defend her lair. Near her haunt, one will find wands wedged into trees and aimed at the path to her home.



Agatha's lair has new defenses now. Her spells enable her to charm owlbears and, occasionally, the people of Conyberry, into digging pitfall traps along the path to her lair. These servants have also been seen guarding her haunt. Other than this, Agatha does not bother the folk of Conyberry. Rather, she views them as allies. Agatha often uses her spells to bring them beasts for food in the worst winter weather. She also slaughters orcs and brigands who venture too near to the village. Folk in Conyberry regard Agatha almost affectionately as their guardian and friend. They often talk about her, and speculate on what she's up to. The villagers are also interested in news

of the North, particularly talk of whether the orcs are on the march again.

The main place to socialize in town is Conyberry's Hall. Here, folk gather for communal feasts, or meet to drink, smoke, and gossip most nights. The Hall is also where travelers spend the night. The building itself is a large rectangular pavilion with two removable walls, a flagstone floor, and a stout thatchand-beam roof with a large overhang. There is a large hearth chimney at either end, and a few rustic benches and tables. In winter, both permanent walls are stacked to the rafters, inside and out, with firewood. There is a deep well in the





center of the hall, and a hitching post outside that is surrounded in winter by a windbreak made of baled straw

Travelers arriving at the Hall are usually met by one of the people standing guard. This person is always covered by another on a roof nearby, armed with a crossbow. The first guard finds out if travelers have anything to sell or barter, or if they want to buy anything.

Locals sell beer and food. Ale is usually 2 cp per jug (an earthenware crock that can fill four good-sized tankards) and "firebeer" costs 5 cp for each jug. This is a concoction of ale made stronger by dumping spirits into it. It tastes even more vile than it sounds, but I learned that it can be used as lamp fuel. Available food includes uncooked or stewed rabbit or grouse, biscuits or fresh bread, fresh eggs and salty butter, root vegetables (raw or chopped and fried), and roast pig.

Local tales of treasure center on a legendary lost elven keep called the Sharandar. It was supposedly abandoned by elves who sallied forth to fight orcs, and were overwhelmed. The Sharandar is said to be full of gems, magic items, and armor, as well as fantastic sculpted glass furniture, and other things of beauty. Locals say that the Sharandar is now cloaked by living trees that have overgrown it.

## Goldenfields

Sometimes called the Granary of the North, this walled abbey was founded over a decade ago by the priest Tolgar Anuvien of Waterdeep. Tolgar is a retired senior member of the Company of Crazed Venturers.

Once only a small farm lost in the rolling sweep of the grassy Dessarin meadows, Goldenfields has grown into the largest abbey of Chauntea. It is currently a fortified farm complex sprawling across 20 square miles. Within its walls, over 5,000 devout worshippers of Chauntea tend crops of grain and edible vegetables.

Most folk of Faerûn are staggered by the sheer size of the tillage. It seems like a large slice of the paradise of plenty promised by many gods. Of course, an agricultural wonder like this is walled and jealously guarded. The people of Goldenfields have already driven off more than 20 largescale barbarian raids.

Mounted patrols of 20 or more adventurer-priests<sup>23</sup> scour the lands around Goldenfields. They patrol as far north as the Stone Bridge, and as far east as the High Forest. These patrols seek trolls, goblinkin, and other evils to fight. They also try to capture game for domestication. They challenge all folk they meet, but will not fight unless they are attacked or encounter obviously evil creatures, such as drow or orcs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>A Goldenfields patrol usually includes four or five priests of Chauntea (3rd to 5th level) and five or six men-atarms (F2s to F4s in chain mail and bearing lances). These stalwarts are accompanied by a dozen or more lay brothers and lay sisters (F1s in leather armor, armed with a variety of weapons). There is a 20% chance that any patrol will be accompanied by a wizard of NG or LN alignment (2nd to 5th level). This chance rises to 90% if the patrol is responding to a horn call of alarm or entering known danger.





Goldenfields is rapidly becoming the agricultural backbone of the North. It supplies food to Waterdeep and most of the inland settlements. With its increasing importance, the influence and stature of Tolgar Anuvien has also grown. He is quickly becoming the equal of such rulers as Lord Nasher of Neverwinter and High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon.

Tolgar plans to expand Golden-fields northward to gain control of the strategic Ironford river crossing at Bargewright Inn. From there, Golden-fields could safely expand to the east bank of the Dessarin. Tolgar is now puzzling over just how to absorb, ally with, or take over Bargewright Inn, but he has not yet made any open offers to Feston Bargewright.

Before he can undertake any further expansion, Tolgar needs adventurers willing to defend Goldenfields. Evil creatures such as orcs, brigands, trolls, and a few goblins, bugbears, and foraging monsters still roam the area. Tolgar's defenders must be faithful worshippers of Chauntea or Lathander, with a loyalty to Goldenfields. They will most likely spend their lives patrolling the region. Tolgar's main problem here is that most adventurers would quickly find such service too boring.

Goldenfields enjoys good relations with Waterdeep and all the humanheld cities of the North. It's unofficially a member of the Lords' Alliance, and it will undoubtedly soon join this alliance openly. Tolgar is already in



nearly constant communication with Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun and Piergeiron of Waterdeep.

Goldenfields happily takes in adventurers weary of danger, or on the run from justice elsewhere. They may stay as long as they are willing to work in the fields and fight and defend the abbey-farm if necessary.

Chauntea is said to be very proud of Goldenfields, and allegedly watches over it personally. Rumors say that he guides his workers through dream-visions, and aids his defenders with timely bolts of lightning or earth tremors.

## Griffon's Nest

In the heart of the grass-cloaked hills, west of Shining Creek, stands the little-known village of Griffon's Nest. It is one of the few places where an Uthgardt barbarian tribe has built a permanent settlement. The Nest is a fascinating and dangerous place. Swaggering barbarian warriors are everywhere, and each is always looking to prove his battle-prowess by carving open an outlander.

The journey there is recommended only for the powerful or foolish. One must travel through hills studded with sheep, shepherds, and Uthgardt lookouts who can swiftly summon javelin-hurling patrols of 12 to 16 pony-back warriors.

Once a bandit hold, Griffon's Nest has grown rapidly in recent years. In its former status, a man called Azglyn and his half-orc band controlled the area. This ended when the Uthgardt slaughtered them all.

The current self-declared chief of Griffon's Nest is Kralgar Bonesnapper. Throughout his youth, Kralgar wandered the Sword Coast, seeing all its ways and wealth. He has since become a barbarian who covets the riches and leisure of Waterdeep.

Kralgar has proven a wise leader, keeping feuds and lawlessness to a minimum. He has also managed to show his people the prosperity that trade can bring. Griffon's Nest now includes 20 or so thatched log huts, sealed with baked earth. The huts are arranged around two warehouses and a central longhall, and all of this is encircled by a stout log palisade. Stables are located inside the compound, and a dozen or so small farms lie on the hills around. Perhaps 900 folk live in the Nest, and another 1.000 or so of the Griffon tribe will rally to Kralgar's call.

The Griffon barbarians hunt, farm, and pan for gold in Shining Creek. They buy goods (mainly weapons of good steel) with gold nuggets and dust. They sell woven rush and cane baskets and trunks to traveling merchants who swing by from the Long Road.

The Griffons are the most literate, organized, and skilled Uthgardt. Kralgar welcomes all contact with outsiders, as he believes that anyone in Faerûn may be an ally in his ultimate goal of conquering a rich city of the North. Though Waterdeep would be best, Kralgar will settle for a lesser place if he thinks he can snatch victory. Kralgar has declared ritual war on all cities, and many outlaws and unallied Uthgardt seeking plunder



have joined the Griffons. Visitors to the Nest can expect to meet adventurers of all sorts. Some are probably undercover agents of the Harpers, the Zhentarim, the Cult of the Dragon, the Red Wizards of Thay, or just about any other power group interested in the North. They all seem to believe that the rustic village of Griffon's Nest is a place to watch.

# Grunwald

This place is little more than three dozen crude stone lodges gathered in a clearing in the forest. Here, the Thunderbeast tribe dwells in the Lurkwood. These folk are arguably among the most civilized of the Uthgardt peoples. Unlike most barbarians in the North, this tribe tolerates outlanders, and is always busy trading with the "realms outside." Traders who bring fine cloth or good steel weapons or tools are always welcome at Grunwald. Traders may choose to camp in "the clearing of the rock," or at the Stone Bow. The former is an area of land marked by a huge boulder at its center, where a signal fire is ready for lighting in times of danger. The latter is the name of the building that passes for an inn here.

King Gundar Brontoskin rules here, with a just but firm hand. In Grunwald itself, there is a standing patrol of a dozen veteran barbarian warriors, who are experts with slung stones, hurled spears, and blades. Peddlers report that some of these weapons are dipped in some sort of sleep-inducing substance.<sup>24</sup>

Gundar is a handsome man who is shrewd, attentive, and polite. He is always eager for news of the Realms. Gundar's influence keeps the various Uthgardt tribes from attacking more civilized human settlements in the North. He understands the wisdom of trade and of growing rich, and criticizes the wasting of lives in futile war with others. However, he never forgets that the orcs of the North are always gathering another horde, against which the Uthgardt tribes must stand and fight or be swept away. Polite travelers always seek an audience with Gundar, and give him a small gift. Maps of the Realms lift his heart like a gift of a doll to a small child. He will encourage visitors to provide any news they have. In return, visitors are usually given a feast, where Gundar issues the command that they be unmolested in their doings in Thunderbeast lands

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>When considering the weapons of King Gundar, his bodyguard, and the Grunwald patrol, of which there are two squads of 12 people each, any weapon is 70% likely to be treated with a glistening, translucent gray salve that causes slumber. This salve, called *haedrar*, is kept hidden in small jars somewhere in Grunwald and at the Thunderbeast's clan hearth at Morgur's Mound. It is not for sale. Stolen jars of the stuff have sold in Waterdeep and Calimshan for as much as 60 gp each. The salve is made only by shamans of the tribe from a secret recipe that is known to include herbs and roots found in the Lurkwood.

When a weapon treated with haedrar strikes, it forces the victim to save vs. poison at -3. Success means no sleep effect. Failure means that the victim is instantly slowed to half movement rates and attacks. The effects are exactly the same as the slow spell. The slowed-down victim will collapse into a coma-like state 1d4+1 rounds later. The only things that arouse a victim from this are magic (such as a *neutralize poison*) or the passage of time. The coma will break after 3d4 rounds have passed. If the treated weapon hits a second time, the save is at -2, the third time at -1, and so on. After seven strikes (and a save at +3), so little salve is left that no creature can be affected.





and holds. He also issues them a place in his long and careful memory.

The folk of Grunwald make their coins by logging and trapping. Furs and wood-carvings are their main goods to trade with traveling merchants. In return, they like to barter for silks, woven and dyed cloth, finished garments, and good steel weaponry and hardware of all types. However, the people of Grunwald are always short of coinage, and they will sell their wares outright to a merchant who has nothing to barter. They usually sell pelts for 1 sp each. Unusually fine or large specimens, such as an entire snow bear pelt or the furred shedskin of the seldomseen glacier snake<sup>25</sup> are sold for up to 1 gp. Wood carvings are 5 cp for a small, decorative "whimsy" (a tiny statuette of an upright bear, a rearing horse, or the like). Whittled rings are 1 sp, and large, carved carry-boxes and near life-size statues sell at up to 4 gp. It should be noted that the carvers of Grunwald never make any image that duplicates any Uthgardt totem beast. Asking them to make such a piece will be taken as an insult.

The main income of Grunwald comes from logging. The Thunderbeast tribe considers cutting wood in the western Lurkwood to be their exclusive right. This includes any location within three days walking distance of Grunwald. They are liable to attack transgressors without warning,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>See Appendix III for details of this creature.



seeking to kill. In the wintertime, stripped logs are transported on huge sledges, and sold in Mirabar and Longsaddle. They sell typically for 5 gp to 25 gp each, depending on diameter and length. The longest trunks are highly valued for use as masts and supporting beams. Blocks of dark shanut wood are sold year-round to merchants who make regular runs through the North. These blocks are usually the size of a man's head, but they may be as large as a tall barrel. They vary in price between 15 gp and 55 gp, depending on size and quality. The merchants usually sell them to woodcarvers in Sundabar and Waterdeep.

The houses of Grunwald are family halls that resemble burial barrows or mine tips more than anything else. They are long, oval mounds of heaped stone blocks, roofed with timbers spread over with mud. Mosses and grasses grow on the roofs in profusion. In fact, they are often partially overgrown with bushes and scrub trees. Sometimes, only the massive central chimneys of these halls betray the presence of any structure at all. The stones used to make these buildings were taken from the aboveground fortifications of a former dwarfhold.

The dwarves left this place long before the Thunderbeast tribe came here. The barbarians do know that an intricate network of tunnels lies beneath Grunwald. New entrances to the tunnels are being found every year. The only known dwarven name associated with the crumbling hold is "Thornhammer." Even the dwarves

don't remember if that is a clan name, the name of a prominent individual, or a place name. The Uthgardt use portions of the tunnels as cesspits and bonepits, and forbid anyoneeven themselves—to enter the farther reaches of the tunnels, upon pain of death. To do so, they say, is to bring misfortune to Grunwald, and awaken "the shadows" that lie below. Just what evil might lurk there is uncertain. The Uthgardt decline to discuss the subject when sober. When drunk, though, they often vie with each other in hair-raising tales of fearsome, wildly improbable monsters that flap, lurch, squirm, wriggle, ooze, and pounce through the tunnels and village, slaying and maiming for the sheer delight of it. Small children who fall into the depths may be rescued by using baskets on drop-lines, but children who are caught playing down into the tunnels are expelled from their families to fend for themselves. The sick are often unceremoniously dumped down a shaft, where they perish, broken and alone, in the darkness below.

For all their cruel ways, the folk of Grunwald tolerate and welcome outsiders far more than most of the dangerous Uthgardt tribes. Be warned that the folk of Grunwald don't take too kindly to folk who loiter about their village without a clear reason for being there. If you're not waiting for certain sorts of wood to be cut and brought out, or to meet a specific person who's out venturing or on patrol, you're expected to move along. Failure to do so will result in some hard



questions. Folk who provide bad answers may find themselves imprisoned, run out of town, or even slain out of hand as spies "for the orcs" or "for the darkhearts." The Thunderbeast tribe uses the term "darkhearts" to mean all other Uthgardt folk who harbor any ill will against the Thunderbeasts. In a suspicious Grunwald native's mind, that means anyone of another tribe.

# Landmarks

The rockpiles of the community are overlooked by the crumbling remnants of a keep that rises to the east. This is the King's Lodge. It has only three floors, and it includes a throne room of sorts and a feasting hall. There are also dungeon cells in the lower section. The Lodge has an outside stone stair, with no handrail. Hanging on iron hooks along the wall above these steps are the heads of foes of Grunwald slain by the folk of the village. These are mostly a line of weathered orc skulls, but, from time to time, the fresh head of a would-be thief or dishonest merchant is added.

In the shade of the King's Lodge, in the forest to the east, is a grove sacred to Silvanus. The druids who dwell here heal the folk of Grunwald for free, though a healed patient must refrain from hunting for a tenday. All others will be healed for a fee (steep, I hear). South of the grove, in the east-ernmost arm of the village, is the Hand of Justice, a pavilion marked by the upright gauntlet of a giant. This is a shrine to Tyr. It is attended by a

half-dozen warrior-priests. The priests accompany the Thunderbeast patrols, guide or rescue adventuring wayfarers, and maintain order in Grunwald. King Gundar has often been fascinated by their rulings, and their interpretations of what seemed to be simple laws when he decreed them. He now allows the priests of Tvr to argue over and examine all disputes before he passes judgment. This allows them to hold court, serving as lawyers, advocates, investigators, and jury, and leaving the king to make a decision after they've uncovered all they can. Travelers are warned that they can't expect any lenience or favoritism from these holy clerics. To these priests, justice is all.

# Places of Interest in Grunwald

INN

The Stone Bow



The Stone Bow stands on the south-western edge of Grunwald. It is as large as the King's Lodge, but it sprawls along the rolling ground rather than rising up from it. You can expect to share sleeping quarters with very old and filthy straw, and your own mounts and pack-beasts. You will also share dining quarters with thick smoke from the cooking hearth, and the elbows of everyone else in the place. The Bow can sleep about 50, or, if all of the animals are pushed out, 70. However, there are three good



things about the Bow: it's warm and fairly dry; no one seems to attack anyone else inside; and the food is surprisingly good. There may be unwritten rules forbidding attack within the walls, as it doesn't even happen when folk collide, stumble over sleeping strangers, and so on.

A place to sleep inside at night costs 1 cp for each beast and 2 cp for each person. Feed for an animal (a water bucket and fresh straw) is 3 cp per night, and food is 4 sp per person, including evenfeast and dawnfry. Dawnfry is bacon, fried bread, cheese, a raw onion, and a tankard of thick dark beer. Evenfeast is three tankards of beer, a platter of beef, a handful of parsnips or radishes, some meat dumplings, <sup>26</sup> pickled boar, and offal (liver and tripe fried in fat flavored with beer and pepper).

As rough and revolting as it sounds, I found the Bow and its meals warm, welcoming, and filling. I even slept like a dead man ("a dead man who snores very loudly," said the traveler next to me, in the morning).

# Kheldell

Most folk in the North have never heard of this quiet place, but it's one of my favorite stops. Kheldell is a logging village on the northern edge of the Westwood, tucked into the foothills of the Sword Coast Spires. Its only link to the outside world is a trail winding down through the rolling hills to Red Larch.

Kheldell is just a cluster of log homes around a horse-powered sawmill. About 50 folk live in the village, with another 20 or so loggers working the woods.

These loggers are led by the wizard Ghelkyn, who levitates felled logs while the lumberiacks maneuver them down to waiting horse teams. The horses then drag the logs down to the mill by way of one of the winding forest trails. Finally, after the wood is milled, carts or sledges take the cut wood to market in Red Larch. where Waterdhavian merchants have storage sheds and buvers. Ghelkvn avoids the wrath of the treants and satyrs of Westwood by working with three druids who dwell in the woods, and cutting only where they direct. The folk of Kheldell plant and tend more trees than they cut, slowly extending the forest under the direction of the druids, who call themselves the Dusk Circle. These people dwell in the woods, and are rarely seen in the village.

Kheldell has no one ruler and all decisions are by consensus. However, the people with the most influence here are Ghelkyn and a woman called Shala Thaeral, known as the Voice of the Circle.

I recommend Kheldell as a place to rest from the cares of travel, or to hide from enemies. It's a beautiful,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>In Grunwald, a *meat dumpling* means meat of questionable origin-bear or elk when available, but more often hare, squirrel, or weasel, I'm told, all mixed with scraps from small birds and rodents, and rolled in a suet dough. The dough is made by adding two parts flour to one part suet. This is mixed by hand with enough cold water to make the mixture gluey. The finishing "touch" is a pinch of salt.



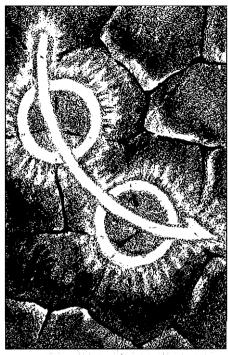
quiet backwater. Kheldell is too small to have an inn, though, so visitors typically sleep on the shuttered back porch of the tavern. However, visitors who bring a donation to Silvanus or Mielikki, and agree not to cut or burn wood during their stay, are allowed to camp in one of the moss-floored glades maintained by the druids. More than once, I've come to such a glade and found a wizard deep in study, or levitating, asleep or with a companion, above the soft greensward.

#### Landmarks

Local legend says the ruins of an elven castle stand in a dell at the heart of the Westwood. Much magic exists in the ruins, and they're supposedly haunted by owlbears and "wild trees." The latter are treants turned to evil, who prey on intruders. The way thence is best sought at night, for the route from Kheldell is marked by ancient spells that cause floating *moonglow* symbols to shine in darkness.<sup>27</sup>

The goddess Mielikki is venerated at a hidden shrine somewhere nearby in the Westwood. Only rangers are guided to her temple.

One interesting, but little-known attraction of Kheldell is Tchandrae Euinwood, a quiet, gray-eyed girl of 12 winters. For a fee of 2 gp per examination (and only in the presence of her protective parents), Tchandrae will examine items brought to her.



She can often tell you things about their histories. This seems to be a gift from the gods, as Tchandrae can't tell you how she does it. <sup>28</sup> Wizards from Waterdeep come here quietly to use her skills.

# Places of Interest in Kheldell

#### Tavern

The Stag at Rest

: DO

Kheldell's sole tavern is a dark, lowceilinged place with a flagstone floor, rough-hewn furniture, and a quiet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>For moonglow details, see Appendix III.

Tchandrae seems to have a natural legend lore power, not psionics; see Appendix I.



atmosphere. After a day of work, the townsfolk are usually too tired for more than a few tankards and a little chat, before they stumble home to bed. However, fresh gossip of the world outside will be welcomed eagerly. Particularly, the folk of Kheldell always like to hear about the "lawlessness and debauchery" of Waterdeep. The only drinks served here are stout (3 cp per tankard), ale (2 cp per tankard), and sugared water (free). A meal is 2 sp, and consists of bread, gravy, and as much as you want from whatever is roasting in the hearth, usually bear, venison or boar. A serving of vegetables is 2 sp extra; in this forest town, they're scarce and must be bought in Red Larch, or from the farms along the Long Road. Sleeping at the Stag is free. The place is run by an incredibly fat, grayhaired woman, known, oddly enough, as Delgara the Slim. She's an expert with a cleaver.29

# Longsaddle

This small village of 130 or so is located on the Long Road. Depending on when you take a look at it, Longsaddle is either sleepy and almost deserted, or dusty and crowded, crawling with bawling livestock and folk eager to buy them. Either way, Longsaddle is little more than a market center for the thousand or so folk who live in the surrounding ranches.

Longsaddle is dominated by the many-spired, crazily chaotic bulk of the Ivy Mansion. This, the ancestral home of the Harpell family, perches atop Harpell Hill in the center of the village. The other buildings in Longsaddle line both sides of the Long Road, which is the only street in the village.

For miles around, the grasslands are claimed by ranchers. The ranches usually include a fortified ranch house, a stockade, and stables. Most ranchers also hire and house longriders. These farmhands are hired more to fight off orc and barbarian raiders. than to tend the stock. Cattle are the predominant livestock, but horses and sheep are also reared. Every ranch also grows its own vegetables, and sells any surplus at market in Longsaddle. The ranchers always send those who are temporarily disabled by injuries or illness to Longsaddle so that someone is waiting there to report the arrival of buyers back to the ranch.

Due to the large amount of trade that ranching brings to the village, the ranchers would probably control Longsaddle, were it not for the capricious, magically mighty Harpell clan.

For generations, the Harpells have brought Longsaddle an importance in the North far greater than its size and purpose would normally warrant.

The Harpells have always been mages. This tradition began with mighty Authrar Harpell, who was famous in the North an age ago for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>This isn't surprising, Elminster tells us. Delgara was once a pirate captain along the Sword Coast. She retired into hiding after slaying the favorite son of one of the high captains of Luskan. Delgara is an F14 and always carries a *dagger* +4 sheathed and hidden in her capacious bosom. No one knows where her treasure is hidden or even if she has any left.





single-handedly destroying an onrushing orc horde with his spells. More recently, Malchor Harpell, along with his Company of Crazed Venturers, once fought off a demigod. On another occasion, fighting alone, he destroyed two Red Wizards of Thay and the undead beholders under their command!

These days, Malchor keeps to the comparative peace of his own Tower of Twilight and is rarely seen in Longsaddle.

The current village elder is Ardanac Harpell, the son of Adanac. He is the only Harpell who can be bothered with the headaches of local politics, or the doings of the world around. Ardanac is by no means the most powerful<sup>30</sup> or eldest Harpell living in the Ivy Mansion. In fact, he doesn't control anything within the walls of the house. By tradition, the oldest Harpell women do that.

The Harpells are a kind-hearted clan, but their magic is capricious. It is also so powerful that Uthgardt barbarians never dare raid Longsaddle, though defiant bands sometimes steal cattle and horses from the outlying ranches around the village.

Longsaddle's location on the overland trade road insures that the village will always have stables ready. Also, a number of craftsmen have come to the village because of the protection of the Harpells. Most importantly though, Longsaddle is an important source of

<sup>30</sup> Ardanac is an NG hm W9



beef and mutton, attracting buyers from all over the North. Shipping masters come from all of the port cities, especially Luskan and Waterdeep, to compete furiously for the trade.

Meat intended for local consumption usually travels to its destination as livestock. Meat that will end up in a ship's hold, though, is usually brought to the Harpells' stall at the market. For 5 gp per carcass, a Harpell will seal fresh meat into a magically applied and hardened shell. This casing, made of mixed clay and leaves, fades after 10 days. In the meantime, though, the magic keeps the meat cool and sealed from the air. The shell also keeps the scent of the meat concealed from predators. The sealed meat can usually be transported to a boat and dumped into a hold full of ice, or for long voyages to the South, salt, before the magic fails.

The Harpells put their youngest children to work at this duty, starting them into magic at an early age. The monotony of this task usually has the effect of encouraging the children to experiment with, and eventually master, stronger magic.

The Harpell family is experimenting with shrinking animals to miniature sizes. They hope to breed them as stable species at the smaller size, to allow for maximum food use and minimal feed consumption. A furious private debate is currently raging within the

family over the morality of such tampering with natural forces, but the research continues. To this date, few of the results, known as minimals, have been released onto the market.<sup>31</sup>

Folk who travel the North think of Longsaddle as a place where you must watch your step, because of the magic hurled about everywhere. Moreover, griffons that dwell in the nearby hills sometimes attack travelers on the road. Even the local ranchers have begun to hire apprentice wizards to escort their shepherds and longriders. These wizards are usually equipped with wands of paralyzation bought from the Harpells. The Harpells have magic to spare, and they will use it without hesitation to aid travelers and villagers alike.

Most people think that scores of wands, rings, and magic trinkets must be hidden all over Longsaddle, so there's never a shortage of curious visitors poking around the village, looking for all this hidden magic. Many of the searchers are reckless young thieves, or ambitious agents of the Zhentarim or other groups. There are several such groups known to frequent Longsaddle. These include the Cult of the Dragon: the Arcane, a wizards' guild that rules Luskan through the five high captains; and the Talonmists, a family of sorcerers who dwell near Westbridge. The latter are hereditary enemies of the Harpells. <sup>32</sup>All are a source of constant

<sup>31</sup> See MC2, "Mammal, Minimal."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>See Appendix II. The Talonmists are known to include several liches in their ranks and at least six mages of level 20 or greater. Their chief interests lie in controlling and influencing events on other worlds and planes. Some of the younger Talonmists, though, are becoming restless. They'd like to take over either the Zhentarim or the Red Wizards of Thay—or both-and carve out their own vast slave empire in Faerun. Their elders regard such plans as akin to dirtying one's own lair, or youthful foolishness, so they have sternly forbidden it. This may be all that keeps much of the North free.





irritation to the villagers, and constant amusement to the Harpell children, who delight in using magic to play pranks on the visitors.

There are two sets of wards at work in Longsaddle. The first is oval, and it surrounds the village proper. Its function is to continuously signal the location of beings within its confines that don't possess ward tokens. It also allows the Harpells to send an audible message to all beings who do have ward tokens. The token for this ward is a small slate arrowhead engraved with a certain rune. Every resident of Longsaddle has such a token, and the Harpells are adept at using spells to trace these tokens if they are

stolen or hidden.

The second ward is circular, and encloses Harpell Hill, the area that includes the Ivy Mansion. Only members of the Harpell family have tokens to pass this ward.

The boundary of the ward acts as a dome-shaped *wall of force* to all magic cast by anyone who doesn't have a token. It also affects all physical things that are not in contact with a token bearer. Thus, hurled weapons or flying griffons are locked out, but a Harpell riding an aerial mount would pass the ward as if it were not there.

Any bearer of a ward token can open a hole in the boundary to allow free passage of a nonbearer, but this

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix II again.



sets off a signal to all token bearers within the ward. There are also two gates that are near to, but not corresponding with, the apparent road gates, which are false. The real ward gates allow passage without alarms being activated, but each of these is guarded at all times by a Harpell. This person might appear as a child playing in the dirt or an old man sleeping, but it will always be a mage of some power.

The Harpells' ward tokens are tiny, clear, crystal ovals, like eye lenses, with a pattern cut into them. Harpells often conceal their tokens by gluing them to toenails or wearing them over their eyeballs.

## Landmarks

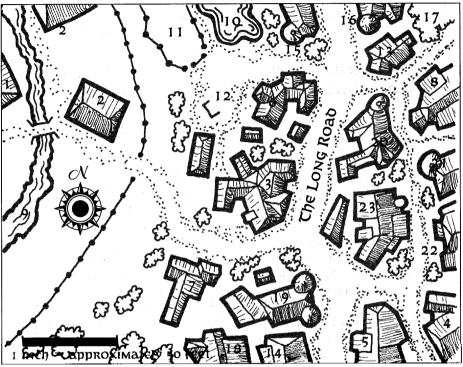
The chief landmark in town is the Ivy Mansion.<sup>34</sup> This is a constantly expanding building is an ongoing tumult of experimental spells going wrong, incorrectly mixed potions exploding, and magical pranks. Few are allowed to visit the Ivy Mansion, and fewer still see any more of the Mansion than the central dining and meeting room. This room is a domed, circular hall, known as the Fuzzy Quarterstaff. It is dominated by a central hearth and chimney, surrounded by many feasting tables. There is also

a bar, with a background orchestra of magically animated instruments. Senior mages of the family often project large, animated images of the locales they're currently scrying in the Realms. In all, the room is a delightful place.

There is one other notable family home in Longsaddle. It's a building called Griffonposts. Named for the statues that surmount its gateposts, this tall house is surrounded by a walled garden of dark, thickly grown, forbidding pines and duskwoods. It is the seat of the Stormrider family, who have reared famous rangers for at least six generations The current matriarch of the family is Oblayna Stormrider. She established a trail across the High Forest that is still a family secret. She used the trail to bring back powerful magic from the ruins she found in the eastern reaches of that vast wood. Oblavna now dwells here in quiet seclusion, happy to raise her grandchildren. Her children include the rangers Shaellina and Torst Stormrider of Sundabar, and Myrin Stormrider of the Tor. Myrin dwells atop Maiden's Tomb Tor, near Waterdeep, and is hired to guide many expeditions by the nobles of the city. All three Stormriders continue to win fame and glory

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>At any given time, the Ivy Mansion is home to at least a dozen mages over 14th level and almost three dozen wizards of lesser power. The DM can assume that almost every magical item described in the *DUNGEON MASTER*<sup>TM</sup> *Guide* is hidden somewhere in the mansion. There are extradimensional chambers that can be reached through doors at the backs of closets in various spots in the mansion. The house has a pet faerie dragon as a guardian. This is an old, blue-green specimen named Ssintlar (see MC3 for details of this powerful creature). The Harpells won't hesitate to blast intruders to the Nine Hells in a hurry if need be, but they prefer to be more whimsical than that, even in the midst of furious combat. They are more likely to hurl an opponent up through a chimney to smash into the domed ward overhead. As a finishing touch, they might turn the offender into some silly (and more or less helpless) creature on the way down.





# Longsaddle

- 1. The Ivy Mansion
- 2. Harpell Hill Farm
- 3. The Gilded Horseshoe
- 4. The Leaping Hooves Trade
- Stables 5. The Rolling Wheel
- 6. Nalathar's Fine Stirrups & Spurs
- 7. Jaster's Ring of Bells 8. The Horn and Hoof
- 9. The Hill Stream 10. Saddle Pond
- 11. The Paddock

- 12. Market Podium
- 13. Sixhorns Select Wares
- 14. The Gambling Golem
- 15. The Night Cloak
- 16. Beliver family home
- 17. Griffonposts
- 18. Dostril family home
- 19. Feldryn family home
- 20. Gosstal family home
- 21. Irimarl family home
- 22. Ostever family home
- 23. Ostever's Slaughterhouse



as they walk the perilous wilderlands of Faerûn. 35

# Places of Interest in Longsaddle

#### Ranches

#### The Cadrasz Ranch

The Cadrasz family raises cattle on a large ranch northeast of Longsaddle. They're a quick-tempered clan, with a small amount of orc in their bloodline. Because of this, the Cadrasz constantly find themselves mixed up in many local feuds and misunderstandings. They're not totally innocent, though—the Cadrasz string up the bodies of slain raiders the way that other farmers erect scarecrows. Local lore whispers that these dead come to unlife on dark nights and walk the fields, strangling anyone they meet.

Cadrasz Brand: An upright left hand about to grasp a star.

#### The Emmert Ranch

The Emmerts are cattle ranchers—specifically, they're the chief rivals of the Cadrasz family. They're a prolific clan of very tall, handsome folk, many of whom have become expert warriors and rangers. The Emmerts have perfected fighting in a pincer

formation, using mounts and lances. The head of the family swings a magical *storm star* in battle.<sup>36</sup> The Emmerts are making a name for themselves as their kin leaves the ranch to scatter all over the North.

Emmert Brand: Three arrowheads forming a tight circle, with their points aimed inward.

#### The Kromlor Ranch

The Kromlors raise horses and sheep on a ranch northwest of Longsaddle. They're a family of stolid longriders who arm themselves with whips. The Kromlors remain ice calm as they mercilessly hunt down orcs, goblins, kobolds, and trolls, leaving a trail of burned corpses in their wake.

Kromlor Brand: Two sheep's horns protruding from a diamond.

#### The Mammlar Ranch

The Mammlars raise cattle and sheep. Their ranch lies north of Longsaddle, along the east side of the Long Road. The Mammlars are the wildest and most skilled longriders of Longsaddle. The ranch sends out regular patrols armed with lances and crossbows to scour the area for miles north of the ranch.

Mammlar Brand: An upright double-headed arrow.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Oblayna Stormrider is an LG hf R16, now in her eighties. She is armed with many magical items accumulated by the family over the years. These are hidden in the house. Many are guarded by *spell triggers* that will bring doom to thieves. Her daughter Shaellina is an NG hf R9, and her son Torst is a CG hm R10. Both are based in Sundabar, and serve the interests of that city in defying the evil orcs. Their older brother Myrin Stormrider of the Tor is a CG hm R15. Of the notable Stormrider rangers, Oblayna's brother-in-law Eryndar and sister-in-law Shalassa disappeared on an expedition across the planes three winters ago. When they disappeared, Eryndar was a CG hm R17, and Shalassa an NG hf R15. Those who would learn more of this remarkable family are advised to consult Elminster.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>See Appendix III for details of this magical item.



#### The Sharnshield Ranch

The Sharnshields farm horses and cattle on a ranch southwest of Longsaddle. They're a haughty family whose members are largely female, and they're capable warriors as well as riders.

Sharnshield Brand: Crossed swords with a horizontal bar below them.

#### The Suldivver Ranch

The Suldivvers are sheep ranchers. They have a tract of land, known as Rock Ranch, located on poor ground southeast of Longsaddle. They are generally a fat and easy-going clan, though some may say they're just lazv.

*Suldivver Brand:* Three links of a chain, arranged horizontally.

#### The Zelorrgosz Ranch

The Zelorrgosz are outlanders. They came from eastern Amn over a hundred years ago. These cattle ranchers are a dusky-skinned family of tireless riders. They're also polite, learned folk who send their children to live with tutors all over the North as they grow up, so they have as wide a view of Faerûn as possible.

Zelorrgosz Brand: Two triangles, arranged side by side to look like eyes.

## Shops

#### Jaster's Ring of Bells

Bell Caster

8 8 8 8 3 3 3 3

This is the workshop and store of Jaster Redshar, a caster of bells who does a steady trade in outfitting local herd animals, as well as selling to merchants who come through. He's very proud of his finger bells. These are tiny bells with a high, clear tone, suitable for adorning garments and pets (12 gp each). Larger bells range in price from 1 gp to 20 gp.

# The Leaping Hooves Trade Stables

Horse Trader



The Leaping Hooves does a steady and profitable business buying worn-out mounts and selling fresh horses to travelers. When trading horses, there's a fee of 1 sp, so Urvon, the stablemaster, never loses much in any transaction.

# Nalathar's Fine Stirrups & spurs

Stirrup and Spur Maker



Longsaddle's second largest export business, after livestock, is moving the finely forged wares of Nalathar Druyn. Nalathar is a finesmith who makes spurs and stirrups of plain design at the best quality. Here, 1 sp will buy any single stirrup or spur. However, the prices rise manyfold as his wares are bought and sold all across Faerûn. Merchants with room on their wagons never fail to pick up a few pieces on their way through.



#### Ostever's Slaughterhouse

Slaughterhouse



This is the scene of an infamous scandal that spread quickly across the North about five winters back. It was discovered that goblin and orc victims of the winter raids were being chopped up and mixed in with the usual offal, and ground into sausages. The culinary crime was revealed when orc fingers were found under the grinding table.

Bamall Ostever has weathered that storm, and still serves as the butcher to buyers wanting to take home meat, rather than live animals, from the market. However, his fellow villagers don't buy sausage from him anymore, and he has to endure their ceaseless dark jokes about checking the backsides of nearby folk whenever he displays any bacon for sale. People have long memories in Longsaddle.

#### The Rolling Wheel

Traveler's Supplies



Visitors who need gear can buy torches, candles, lanterns, tarps, ropes, spikes, shields, and even dry firewood at the Rolling Wheel. The name of the shop comes from the replacement wheels bought in bulk from Waterdeep, sold for 20 gp each, or 50 gp for a pair and an axle (the price is firm).

#### Sixhorns Select Wares

Dry Goods



This store is the "all things small and sundry" shop in this community. Here, one can buy everything from chamber pots to socks. Belt daggers are an especially popular buy at 2 gp each. Canvas sacks, waxed against the weather, go for an outrageous 1 gp each. This price is surpassed only by stout, crudely built hand chests at 20 gp, and blanket chests at 35 gp each. <sup>37</sup>

#### Tavern

#### The Horn and Hoof



This is the sort of tayern that survives because a village is too small to have anything better. It has an awesome assortment of potables in its cellar, and they are served at high prices—a minimum of 7 sp for a tankard or 9 sp for a tallglass. The wines climb sharply from that base price to a high of 76 gp per tallglass for elverquisst. A hand keg of inferior beer costs 10 gp, and a bottle of passable wine 14 to 20 gp. Those wishing to drink in the Paddock can buy whole bottles, at the same outrageous prices, from a window in the back wall of the Hoof.

The atmosphere reminds me of hogs crowded up against a slop trough. It's a good place to go if you enjoy being elbowed by everybody

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Many blanket chests see use as coffins in the Dessarin region.



else in town, or want to start a fight. It's definitely not a place to talk privately; most conversations are carried on at full bellow, lips to ears, over the bellows of those around. It is rare to come back from a session there without wearing somebody else's drink, as the drinks are passed over the heads of the drinkers, and there is always some spillage. From time to time, someone gets everyone singing. When this happens, everyone for miles around knows. The tavern sways in time to the movements of the shoulder-to-shoulder drinkers, and the sound of joyous voices lifted in song drifts on the breeze.

The Hoof never closes. The barkeeper is a scarred ex-warrior who sports a truly ferocious red mustache. He goes by the name Malavos Drunn. 38 He attempts to keep order with the aid of a stout cudgel, a barrel of darts soaked in sleep venom, and a wand of magic missiles. All of these are kept behind the bar for ready use in emergencies. Nonetheless, knifings are common. It's easy not to notice an attack until the victim's shoulders sag and he falls out of the press of drinkers. The bodies of the dead. sick, or slumbering are simply tossed outside.

#### INN

#### The Gilded Horseshoe

!! BBBB

The Gilded Horseshoe is run by "Trappy" Snulgers, an amiable, paunchy, scatterbrained, fringe-bearded man. He often lurches about chortling at old jests and remembered pratfalls from a long-ago adventuring career. Formerly a trapper, he opened the inn to give cattle buyers a warm place to stay and a stable for their horses. The inn is an old feed barn, and apt to be drafty, but Trappy and his 16 daughters make everyone feel welcome. They tack up old bedsheets and furs to cut the worst winds.

The inn costs 2 gp per person per night. This includes stabling for one animal, and an evening meal. Trappy and his daughters serve truly gargantuan meals. My favorite dish at the Shoe is turkey in a mushroom, parsley, and garlic sauce-my mouth waters just remembering it. Drinks are extra. Prices are typically 3 cp each for beers, 1 sp each for zzar or firewine, and 3 sp each for spirits. They also sell rabbit pies to eat on your journey for 5 cp each. One pie is a complete meal for a large and hungry person. At the Shoe, you get your own bed. Private rooms, though, are an extra 1 gp per night, and only 10 are available.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Malavos Drunn is an NE hm F10 (STR 16). He has considerable treasure hidden in the cellars of the Hoof. One particular room, containing much of the treasure, is entered through a false wine cask found in the roomy cellar. The front of the cask swings open like a door to reveal an aromatic tunnel to the main treasure room. Drunn fences stolen goods, but takes care that none of his neighbors know. Of course, some know anyway. In particular, the Harpells have privately warned him what they'll do if they discover him working with agents of the Zhentarim or Hellgate Keep.



The inn has its own stockade to keep stock theft to a minimum, and Trappy keeps a disused chimney full of what he calls "fists of fire." These are ready to be hauled up to the roof for defenders to hurl down at orc raiders. These defenders can crouch for protection behind the low parapets on the roof.

#### Festhall

#### The Night Cloak



Longsaddle's festhall is a dim, tapestry-hung place where travelers can rent rooms by the tenday or month. The interior is lit by enchanted *glowing globes*. They were given the forms of small, flickering upright ovals, and cast on unlit candles, so that the place appears to be lit only by candle lamps. Rooms are comfortably furnished with armchairs, rugs, footstools, canopied beds, writing tables, and wardrobes. All of the furniture is battered, but serviceable.

Rooms cost 1 sp per night if rented by the month, or 2 sp per night if rented by the tenday. Either way, you must prepay. You may leave and return, and your room will be held for you, locked against unwanted intrusion. Evenings spent with lady companions are 10 gp per night extra, but this includes a bath and a meal, both administered by the companion. Those wishing to avoid the ladies at work can enter by a back, staircase, outside.

Rowdy guests are warned that the establishment's name comes from the nickname of its proprietress, Alastra Hathwinter. She's an archmage of some adventuring prowess. Her power is evidenced by her reaction to a Zhentarim mage who threatened her. She cast a smiting spell that propelled him clear down her uppermost hall and across the street beyond. All these years later, you can still see the outline his body left on the chimney of the house opposite the festhall.

## Gambling Houses

## The Gambling Golem

for Drink Prices

This is an old, rambling house whose sloping floors creak alarmingly. It is crowded with pipe smoke and people eager to lose their money at games of dice and cards. There are also two specialty games. One is known as *fighting frogs*. This involves trained frogs fitted with leg spurs. It's a cruel sport and is looked on with disapproval in most other places and reviled by priests of nature deities and druids.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>These are standard oil pots wrapped in clay to keep breakage to a minimum. This also keeps the rope wicks, stuck to the sides of the pots, burning well. They do 2d6 points of damage on the first round and 1d6 on the second to directly hit targets. Anyone within a 3-foot-diameter area will suffer 1d3 hp of damage. Most folk can loft these only about 60' from the palisade (with minimal accuracy). Trappy, though, is a CG hm F8 who has practiced with these for hours. He can hurl them 70 feet away with his usual THACO of 13, tossing 4 per round like some sort of manic windmill.



The second game is called scattershields. This rarely seen game is played on a slate table with a gutter and a raised lip along all four sides. In the center of the table is a hollow, called the *throne*. Around this are affixed six small, curved, metal replicas of war shields.

Each player has six glass spears (marbles) of a chosen color. A round consists of each player in turn tossing a marble onto the table. Each player tries to place one of his spears in the throne, and to knock the spears of all other players away from it. Spears that end up in the gutter are out of play, but spears that strike the lip and bounce back onto the slate are still in play. At the end of a round, points are counted for the positions of spears still in play. Those in the throne command the highest points, and those closer to the gutter receive less, in concentric scoring rings.

The women and men of Longsaddle are expert players of this game, which has the charm of being governed by skill and not the whim of Tymora. Harpells are forbidden to play; the temptation to use magic to help their spears has always proved too strong. Locals like to talk about a match between two Harpells wherein the spears turned to miniature griffons and fought each other. The gaming table pitched like waves sloshing around in a rain barrel, and small strokes of lightning leapt from shield to shield.

# Mornbryn's Shield

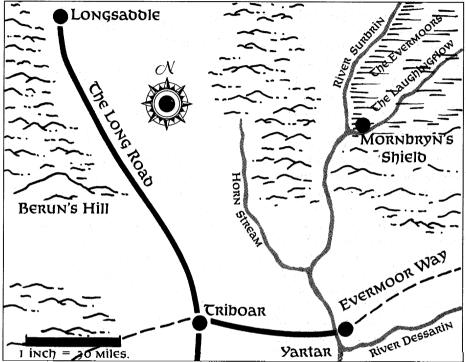
This hamlet stands on the north bank of the confluence of the River Surbrin and the Laughingflow. Mornbryn's Shield takes its name from the rocky, horseshoe-shaped ridge that forms a natural rampart along the west and south sides of the settlement. It is this ridge that shields the community from the violent spring flooding of the two rivers.

Mornbryn was a ranger of some fame in the North, over 400 winters ago. Legend says that his underground tomb is somewhere under these rocks. It's said to be a complex of rooms crammed with the treasures offered by the many communities he had rescued from orcs and trolls. He would not accept these rewards in life, but they were laid to rest with him after his death.

Most folk believe that the treasure is still hidden. Others say that the tomb was found long ago, and that the community was built over it in order to prevent it from being plundered. Magic is said to lie among the coins, crowns, and gems, but the rocks of the Shield contain much durneth. This is known to the dwarves as a very rare, hard, leaden stone that masks magical auras. This durneth prevents easy detection of any magical items.

The folk of Mornbryn's Shield are a hardy lot. Day after day, they face the fury of the Evermoors, which either sends wind howling out of the northeast, or cloaks them in damp,





clammy fog that usually conceals creeping trolls. Those ever-present menaces of the moors like to attack when fog masks their approach, dulls their sounds, and dampens fire, their deadliest foe.

The Shield is a community of shepherds, fisherfolk, and moss growers. The mosses of the Shield are prized far and wide across Faerûn for their medicinal properties. They also form a secret ingredient in Waterdhavian hair dyes and perfumes made in Waterdeep and Amn. It is also fashionable to eat Shield mosses in some circles of nobility in

Waterdeep and Calimshan, and, when times were less troubled, Tethyr. The mosses are deep-fried and coated in various sauces or in wine-and-peahen gravy. I find it brittle and not particularly tasty, 40 but some folk swear by it. In the markets of Waterdeep, many folk will pay 4 gp per handful of moss. It remains a delicacy even when it's old enough to be quite dry, and has turned gray instead of its usually bright bluegreen. Some traveling merchants reach the Shield by barge up the Surbrin, and then buy whole boatloads of moss, typically for 50 to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>Elminster says that fried Shield moss tastes rather like the corn chips made in our world. However, it's slightly more brittle, so the dining experience is rather like eating hard, fried noodles-or biting down on a mouthful of twigs.



75 gp per barge, depending on the competition from other possible buyers.

The damp rocks of the moor also support other vegetables, and the nearby land is used to graze the longhaired, hardy ponies that are bred here for local use.

The visitor will find that the Shield is a small, damp, stone-built community, always alert to the changing weather and to troll activity. Only 30 or so houses crowd together in the angle formed by the meeting rivers. They stand inside the ridge, a good 30 feet above the flood line. The ridge itself rises 20 feet up from the ground on the land side, and it has been

carved away on that side. This was done to create a walkway guarded by a rampart. The walkway is reached by precipitous flights of stone steps.

The northeastern edge of the community is guarded by a small stone keep, and a circular, walled garden planted with old, gnarled trees.

The keep is used by the community militia as an armory. It boasts fire-hurling catapults, enough fire pot missiles to burn down most of the nearby Lurkwood, and no less than 250 suits of full plate armor. The keep is guarded at all times by a ring of mist. This is a ward that is linked to 14 helmed horrors. <sup>41</sup> The horrors will attack anyone entering the keep,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>See Appendix II for details of typical wards and their linked monsters. Mornbryn's Tomb has unusual wards, details of which are only known to certain worshippers of Mielikki, and so don't appear here.





unless, of course, the intruder bears a ward token. Only militia members have these, and there is a rule against carrying them outside the Shield. It is hoped that this will ensure that the tokens will never fall into the wrong hands.

The stone-walled garden is a very old shrine to Mielikki, where many weapons rust away on an altar formed by a living tree. These arms were wielded in her honor by now-dead rangers. Many northern rangers make pilgrimages here, in order to worship the Lady of the Forest in the presence of the relics of her greatest servants.

The only place considered more holy to Mielikki is the headwaters of the Unicorn Run, in the depths of the High Forest. Rangers who have been rewarded for their deeds often leave offerings here on the altar—and the offerings disappear soon after. The locals say that the tributes are taken away at night by the Sisters Who Serve. Just who or what these



"sisters" are, though, or where the treasure goes, is a mystery. 42

In general, Mornbryn's Shield is a surprisingly nice place to stay. However, it is bleak in the midwinter, endangered by trolls at all times, and far too small to interest or engage a traveler for more than a day.

Travelers are warned to keep children indoors, and hidden as much as possible. Also, try to conceal wounds or other weaknesses. There are persistent rumors that at least one doppleganger is keeping watch on the Shield. It is rumored to enter the Shield regularly, in the shape of a villager or one of the roving peddlers who often stops at the local inn. It surveys the folk who have come to town, and then reports back to a nearby band of trolls. It also figures out who might be worth ambushing.

# Places of Interest in Mornbryn's Shield

Shop

Caldreth's Cobbling Cobbler

Caldreth Wyvernlyng makes and fixes shoes, boots, and weather-cloaks.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Elminster snorted when he read this. "Such melodrama," he snorted. "The sisters are two human sisters-quite nice folk, and skilled rangers themselves, too. They know how to keep their mouths shut. They take the offerings down into Mornbryn's Tomb, of course. And they hold the only tokens to pass its wards." He shivered. "Scary stuff, those wards." He then quickly changed topics and refused to discuss this any further.



He's especially proud of his riverwaders. These are waxed, heavy leather boots that come up to the crotch of the wearer. He charges 9 gp for each pair of these.

#### Restaurant

#### The Maid of the Moors

The Maid of the Moors is a restaurant run by Beldora Thiiruin. 43 The Maid is a sunny, cheery place with many hanging ferns and other plants, and large expansive windows. (Shutters can be fitted in case of a severe storm or a troll raid.) Beldora also lets her pet bats fly about, allegedly to hunt insects.

The Maid features a small but hearty menu. A fresh garden salad, priced at 1 cp, consists of lettuce leaves awash with whitecurds, 44 olives, parsley, shavings of parsnip and strong cheese. A fryplate is priced at 2 cp. This consists of bacon and fried tomatoes covered with a mound of sliced almonds and fried mushrooms, and then slathered with buttered, scrambled eggs flavored with a pinch of pepper and a few drops of brandy.

Bustards are the decapitated, gutted, and declawed carcasses of the large ground quail of the moors. These are rolled in clay and then

thrust into a roaring fire so that the clay can later be broken off, taking the feathers with it. The singed birds are cooked slowly in covered pots, in a bubbling gravy made from quail eggs, beef drippings, flour, and the stock vielded from steaming cabbage and asparagus. The latter grows in profusion on the moors, and may be picked and eaten at will by the traveler who isn't so unobservant as to crush it all under his boots. Beldora charges 6 sp for a platter with two bustards awash in gravy, accompanied by circles of fried flatbread. I'd gladly pay more than thrice that for such a heavenly meal.

There is also less exciting, but adequate fare, from turtle soup (3 sp for a bowl) or roast beef (9 sp for a platter; 3 gp for a whole roast), to spiced river fish (5 sp per platter if eels are included; 8 sp for a platter if they're not). Beldora also features strong spiced rice, served with buttered snails, sliced nuts, and dunroot, at a price of 4 sp per bowl. It's a real surprise to find such a dish so far from the south.

Drinks include tea, various chilled and mixed fruit juices, and hot broth. Those wishing for something stronger are directed to the inn; Beldora says she hasn't enough time or hands to do more than one thing right, and she's always preferred eating to drinking.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>Beldora is a CG hf P6 of Lathander, though she keeps this fairly quiet. She invests heavily in any new ventures mounted by her neighbors. She is well liked because of this and her open, friendly personality. She wears *bracers* of defense *AC2* and fights with a mace and morning star. She has hidden *12* blocks of *incense* of *meditation* and 4 candles of invocation for use when the success of her spells is critical, such as in defense of the Shield against a major troll attack.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>Cottage cheese to us, according to Elminster.



INN

#### The Troll in Flames



The traveler will find that the Shield is too small to have a proper inn. The lone tavern, though, called the Troll in Flames, does rent out rooms for the night, but has only four to offer. Two are so small that they can sleep only three folk—and that only if someone sleeps on the floor beside the lone bed.

Rates are 2 sp per person per night. This includes a tankard of ale and a basket of hot spread bread. Spread bread is a dish made of crusty rolls spread with garlic butter, and then spread again with a paste made locally from tiny silverlings. These are river fish that get scooped up along with the larger fish. Silverlings taste rather like the sardines known along the Sword Coast, only with an added smoky or mushroom-like hint.

That's the only food the Troll serves. It has a limited selection of good ales and fine, sturdy, unspectacular wines. Drinks are priced by the pitcher for beer (7 sp to 1 gp, depending on the brew) and by the bottle for wine (9 sp to 9 gp). The top price is shared by zzar, Saerloonian glowfire, and evershimmer. The latter is the sweet, strong freshwater wine traditionally made in Everlund.

The tavernmaster is a gruff-voiced and rotund gnome by the name of Flanagus Gnarlybone. He has been known to stock up on a wine or brew favored by a traveler who stops by regularly.

The tavern's signboard, by the way, shows a laughing troll head wreathed in raging flames.

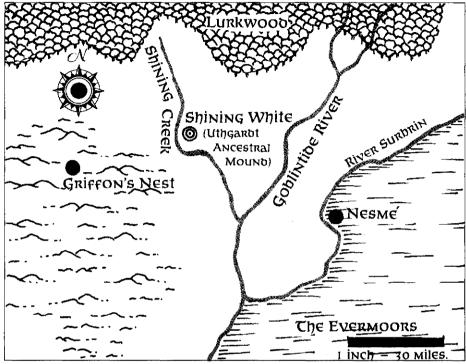
# Nesmé

This fortified trading town of about 6,000 folk is in turmoil. Recently, it was hit by Uthgardt barbarians raiding from Griffon's Nest and by trolls coming down the Surbrin from the northern valleys. Also, during the Time of Troubles, Waukeen was destroyed, and the ruling clergy of Nesmé lost all their powers.

Nesmé lives by its trade; its citizens couldn't attack everyone who approached, so they were often caught in ambushes by false caravans. The Riders of Nesmé were hard pressed to defend the crumbling fortifications of the town against the external threats, so the citizens had to settle things themselves. This process is still sorting itself out; visitors to Nesmé are advised to hold their tongues, keep weapons ready, and stay alert.

The wizardess Tessarin "Long-tresses" Alaurun, a long-time resident of the town and a fierce opponent of the theocratic Council of Nesmé, led the move for dismissal of the clergy. The Council was deposed, and Tessarin administered new elections. Adventurers in town at the time led the townsfolk in voting. The citizens decided to reorganize the Council. Tessarin herself took over rule of Nesmé as First Speaker of the





Council. She also brought in Jygil Zelnathra, the former high priestess of Waukeen, as her apprentice.

Two Council seats were permanently left open: one seat represents merchants, and the other represents adventurers. These positions are to be filled at random by a different person at each Council meeting.

The townsfolk then seized the spired temple of Waukeen and used much of its treasure to hire fresh Riders and to refortify the town. The temple is now a camping hall for visiting merchants, at a price of 1 gp per night.

Today, Nesmé has the best stone walls between Mirabar and

Silverymoon. The fortifications bristle with arrow catapults and heavy catapults.  $^{45}$ 

The new strength of Nesmé has made Kralgar, the Uthgardt ruler of Griffon's Nest, even more determined that this town will be his. At the same time, though, those very fortifications have put off a time when such a barbarian victory would be possible.

Adventurers and merchants have both been attracted to the new security of Nesmé. The town is seen as a base for trade and for exploration of the hitherto remote and perilous upper Surbrin, where abandoned dwarf holds are said to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>These weapons are detailed in DMGFk2 The Castle Guide.



be numbered in the dozens.46

First Speaker Tessarin welcomes adventurers to her town. Those who wish to have an audience with her can expect to be told the latest news about orc barbarian, and troll activities in the vicinity, and the locations of known abandoned dwarf holds, mines, and ruins.

Tessarin is particularly concerned about recent reports of beholders and undead eye tyrants hunting around the long-abandoned village of Andalbruin. This is the place known for a former school of wizardry, the Dungeon of the Ruins.<sup>47</sup>

Armed nonbarbarian human bands wandering about Nesmé make Tessarin a happy woman. She wants her town to impress its traditional enemies as much as possible. She also wants her town to be known in Waterdeep and all down the Sword Coast. I suspect that she's behind some of the latest rumors, such as the one that new veins of ore and gems have been found east and north of Nesmé. An excited dwarf showed me a handful of gems he swore were mined "north of the

Surbrin" when I was there, so there may be some truth behind all the talk.<sup>48</sup>

There is one definite goal for adventurous types operating out of Nesmé. Somewhere in the broken country north of the Surbrin are cliffs where the daring prospector can chip free the valuable, exceedingly rare, dull, black, oval gemstones known as chardalyn. Chardalyn are known for their property of entrapping spells, and unleashing them later. <sup>49</sup> Of course, adventurers searching out these gems have to do it between battles against orcs, trolls, giants, and other aggressive predators in the area.

Adventurers who get out of line can expect to face the Riders of Nesmé. About a third of this 400-strong force is out on patrol at any one time, except when the town is actually under attack. The Riders patrol the land around for two days' ride in all directions. The organization's ranks have recently been bolstered by adventurers hired on by Tessarin, so they have the necessary muscle to deal with unruly visi-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Elminster says this is true—but the dwarf holds were abandoned because local ore veins had been worked out, and orcs and giants were growing ever more numerous in the area. Adventurers may find meager treasure in the lairs of these two-legged predators, plus whatever can be gleaned from old dwarven tombs, but that's about it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>The school of wizardry, according to Elminster, was a place where reckless mages opened *gates* to other planes at whim and imprisoned all manner of monstrous creatures for study and experimentation. It was once a dwarf hold, but the dwarves moved to Settlestone, a higher, more defensible valley nearby (also now ruined). When the dwarves moved upland, Andalbruin was taken over by human mages cast out from Netheril—a realm, Elminster reminds us darkly, that seemed to allow its citizens to do just about anything. Elminster suspects that giant frog-things seen dancing around fires in Andalbruin were actually the tanar'ri known as hezrou (detailed in MC8 *Outer Planes*).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Elminster says it's all true. "There is a certain wyvern-haunted peak east of Andalbruin," he told me. "It's known as the Watchful Troll, because of the shape of its southern face, which resembles a sitting troll, nose thrust forward. A dwarven adventurer recently found a rich vein of smokestone studded with rubies there. The dwarves of Mithral Hall are searching for this lode, but have not found it so far, and there is talk of dark magic and trick-

ery."  $$^{\rm 49}\!\!{\rm For}$$  details of chardalyn, see Appendix III.



tors.<sup>50</sup> The Riders have always served as a police force for Nesmé, because the transient trading population has always brought thieves, feuds, and other trouble to the city.

Nesmé is a place poised on the brink of action. For good or ill, great events lie close ahead for the folk of the Bridge Town. For now, this is a place for merchants to make money. Tomorrow, it could all be swept away—or it could be the next great city of the North, if nearby Mithral Hall flourishes, if the barbarians of Griffon's Nest are defeated, and if the strength of the trolls and orcs in the area is broken. As sages in Waterdeep are wont to say, "My, but ye have a lot of *ifs* there."

# Landmarks

A fortified bridge links the circular, walled town with a castle on the west bank of the Surbrin. This castle is the stronghold of the Riders of Nesmé. It also encloses the town's docks, paddocks, and stock pens. In the event of a river attack, boulders and flaming oil can be dropped through sliding panels in the bridge floor to sink hostile river barges, a lesson recently learned by a band of orcs. Also, the docks can be cut off from the rest of the western fortress. That fortress can in turn be isolated from the town proper.

When attack is not imminent, the folk of Nesmé grow crops along the

river. They keep sheep and a few cattle on the Evermoors, and they have the right to bring these into the city. Manure produced within the walls is collected for use in the riverbank farms

The west bank of the Surbrin is home to four horse ranches. Here, hardy, high-country horses are bred to withstand the damp summers and harsh winters of the far North. In times of trouble, these ranches have the right to drive their stock into the safety of the western fortress of Nesmé, assuming it can be reached in time. In return, each ranch pays an annual sanctuary tax of 70 gp. South of Westbridge, Nesmé horses are regarded as inferior stock, but in the true North, they command higher prices than other horses, generally 25 gp more than the usual price.<sup>51</sup>

Natural clefts in the rock here yield rich iron. In fact, this was the original reason for a dwarven settlement at this spot. The plateau of the Evermoors still yields rich iron, so Nesmé continues to be an important center for smelting and smithing. Blades made in Nesmé are the solid, dependable swords of the North. Even more important to the local economy, vast numbers of pick heads and shovel blades are exported to just about every nondwarven community in the North.

The Citadel of the Riders on the west side of the Surbrin is doublewarded. The inner ward is around

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>The Riders currently include two W10s and a W9 (plus Tessarin, a W13); a P11 of Tymora, a P10 of Tempus, and P7s of Mystra and Lathander; a T7, three F10s, an R10 and an R9, and a Pa16. There are also many lesser-level adventurers, and most of the veteran Riders are F3s or F4s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>The usual price means those that appear in the *Player's Handbook*.



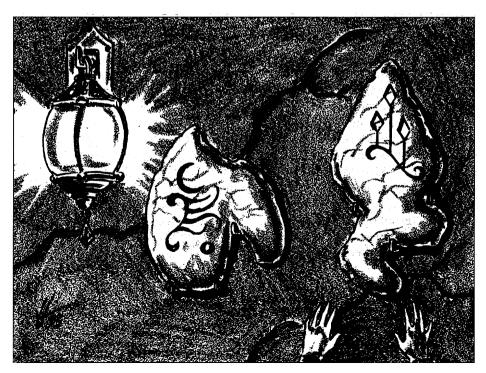
the armory keep itself, and the outer ward is in the dock area and on the bridge. The ward tokens can readily be seen. They are hung high up beside wall lanterns. They are too high for a human to reach without standing on the shoulders of another. In the event of an attack, the tokens can be taken away so that attackers face the monsters linked to the ward. Spare tokens are locked in an inner room of the armory, I'm told.

The outer ward is intended to drive back superstitious barbarians. The monsters that appear in the *wardmist* are the animated skeletons of the largest monsters of the North that were available to the mages who created the wards.

The inner ward hurls one *lightning* bolt at each intruder, and then unleashes the burning skeletons known as *blazing bones* to defend the armory.

The town inside this stern and ready fortress is a busy, bustling place of square stone houses with roof gardens. The gently sloped roofs almost all leak in wet weather, and have meltwater cisterns for gathering ready drinking water. There are at least six forges in the city, plus any number of blacksmiths, finesmiths, scroll-crafters, locksmiths, engravers, and other metalworkers.

Visitors planning a long stay can find rooms to their liking in any of dozens of rooming houses; every-





one with space to spare rents out their upper rooms. Of course, you should be warned that these are the ones that leak the most in wet weather.

# Places of Interest in Nesme

#### Shops

#### The Fallen Temple

Meeting House



The upper levels of the Fallen Temple can be rented out as worship areas by any nondangerous faith. (The definition of *nondangerous* is stretched to allow followers of Loviatar, Malar, and other such faiths to use the facilities.) The cost of this is 50 gp for a night, or 20 gp for half of an evening. Payment must be made to the Council offices in advance.

# The House of the Wise Unicorn

Rental Club



The Unicorn is a quiet club where folk wishing to gamble, talk, or even read can rent a room for the evening. Each room rents for 5 gp, and drinks can be bought by the bottle. There's no sleeping over, and no spellcasting is allowed on the premises, though spell study is permissible. The club is run by a wizard, Nistlor the Undying, and his staff of 16 armed guards and three apprentice wizards.

#### Tavenns

The Cat on the Post
The Duke and the Hunter
The Embattled Dwarf
Five Gold Crowns
The Northwind Arms
The Ringing Anvil
The Sundered Shield



Most visitors to Nesmé find one of the town's taverns. These are all poorly lit, crowded, roaring places full of fighters and mercenaries looking for a tussle. Weapons must be checked at the door. and persons who are clearly wizards or priests are not allowed in, as they do too much damage when drunk. Most of these tayerns serve no food other than bread and whole roast fowl (4 sp/serving). They share a limited selection of drinks, and the prices are the same all across the city: ale is 2 cp for a tankard, stout is 4 sp per tankard, winter wine is 8 sp each tallglass, and zzar is 1 gp for a tallglass. Competition is nonexistent. There are always more drinkers than tavern space, and on most dry evenings the drinkers stumble out into the streets to carouse under the stars. Of course, they're carefully watched by detachments of Riders.

#### lnn

#### The Sleepless Knight

Secure House

Since the spired temple was opened as a camping hall, there are no good



inns left in Nesmé. However, those with money to burn (25 gp per person per night) can rent secure rooms for private deals, or for guarded storage of valuables.

#### Festhall

#### The Pride of the North

The motto of this place is "Every night's a wild party, with jesters and minstrels aplenty!" For 100 gp, you can spend a night with a trained companion after feasting in the great hall. The feast alone is 25 gp, with drinks extra. Prices are 1 gp for a talltankard of beer and 2 gp for a carafe of wine. Jesters and minstrels can always find steady work at the festhall, though the clientele hurls eggs (and worse) to ensure that the turnover among entertainers is high.

# Noanar's Hold

Nobles and wealthy merchants of Waterdeep speak of Noanar's Hold in awe. At least, they do if they're interested in hunting, or pretending to be. Most folk from the South think this is the best place for hunting in all the North <sup>52</sup>

Noanar's Hold is the most popular hunting spot among Waterdhavian nobles too poor to own or defend their own fortified lodge. The Hold is a small village of about 120 folk, clustered around a fortified keep on the north bank of the River Dessarin, upstream from Dead Horse Ford, and just west of the High Forest. Most of the village consists of stone cottages and stables nestling among trees.

Named for a long-dead hunter who once lived in the keep, Noanar's Hold is populated by foresters<sup>53</sup> who make their living hunting game in the High Forest. This consists mainly of deer, bear, and boar, although many smaller furred creatures and forest fowl are also brought home for the table. The foresters also earn good money guiding wealthy thrill seekers from Neverwinter, Everlund, and Silverymoon who want to hunt boar, elk, bear, and owlbears in the Forest.

What most folk don't know about the Hold is that the whole thing is a sham. Five lazy wizards<sup>54</sup> dwell in the keep, and spend their time investing (or spending) the take, and studying spells. They also take the shapes of great winged panthers or crag cats,<sup>55</sup> and menace hunters from afar, shielded against arrows by *protection* 

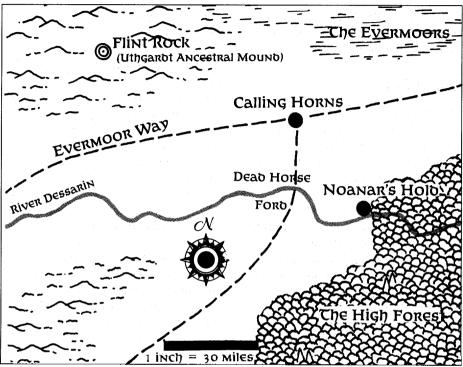
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup>Folk of the North disagree violently over where the best hunting is. Of course, it does depend on the time of year and what you're hunting. Those looking for trolls can't do better than the eastern Evermoors, for instance, but most folk flee trolls rather than hunt them. It is generally agreed that the hunting is best in the deep woods and the northernmost mountain vales—and not anywhere in the Dessarin south of Yartar. Few folk of the North know or even suspect the secret behind the reputation of Noanar's Hold.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>Mainly F2s to F5s of various neutral alignments, not rangers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>A W12, a W10, and three W7s. They go by the title "Hunt Lords" in public, as their proper names might be recognized by former colleagues back in Waterdeep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>For details of crag cats, see Appendix III. The winged panther shapes are identical to crag cats, except that they are MV F116 (C). If attacked or cornered, the wings will waver and disappear, as the wizards concentrate on getting away in crag cat shape.





from normal missiles spells. After scaring the hunters sufficiently, the wizards will lead them into the forest depths, and then vanish via *teleport*.

The wizards have a deepspawn, held captive in a cave deep in the forest near the Hold. They feed it dead stags, owlbears, elk, bears, and other forest game, so that it can spew out living replicas of these game animals for hunters to find. The wizards are very concerned about the reputation of the Hold, and they take care to keep the truth from the village folk. Anyone who stumbles upon the deepspawn, or reveals so much as a good guess about what's going on,

instantly becomes prey. The wizards use the beasts they can create or summon to hunt the hunters until the threat to their tidy little income is dead. Thus, I can never return to Noanar's Hold.

# The Boar With Black Tusks

Inn

!!!! BBB

Noanar's Hold boasts four inns, but the brevity of my stay and necessary haste in departure left me with experiences of only this one. However, I'm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>For details of this monster-producing monster, see FR11 *Dwarves Deep*, or the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Campaign Set.* 



told by Waterdhavian nobles who visit the Hold regularly that this is typical of all four establishments.<sup>57</sup>

#### The Place

The Boar is a dark, cozy place built of massive logs, hiding in the shade of some old, stout shadowtop trees. It rambles up and down the rolling land, linking all 42 guestrooms on a single floor.

Worn carpets keep your feet warm on the way to and from the common dining room, bar, baths, and your own room. Some of these rugs look to be old tapestries, presumably from long-fallen keeps. They're mostly northern hunting scenes, cut into ribbons to fit the hallways.

Furniture is stout and comfortable, and most likely scavenged from those same vanished keeps. No two pieces I saw were alike. There's a strict rule against spellcasting—those who break it are cast instantly out into the night, clad and equipped as they are, forfeiting their possessions. Ostensibly, this ban is to prevent fires and other destructive mayhem, but I suspect that it helps to ensure that the Hunt Lords don't face any challenges.

# The Prospect

Service in the Boar is prompt and courteous. The staff consists of many housemaids who bring towels, drinks, outerclothes, and their own company (typically 40 to 60 gp per night).

The Boar has a laundry and a clothes-mending service. The first charge is included in your room fee; the second is typically a stiff 1 to 3 gp per garment. The inn provides weather-cloaks, high boots, and warm woollen overtunics to guests whose own garb is inadequate for hunting, or is still drying after their last hunt.

The Boar is also known for its baths, where guests of both sexes mingle with the staff in a steamy chamber that has three hot and two cool baths sunk into the floor. All of the baths are of copper, and have a seat ledge inside to allow up to eight guests to sit in comfort. One of the hotwater baths usually has scented oils added to it.

Guests too shy or too dirty to visit the baths can elect to bathe in their own rooms. A portable hip-bath is brought, and filled with water that's lukewarm by the time it reaches you. You're also scrubbed by one of the housemaids. The whole process costs 5 gp, whereas use of the public baths is included in your room fee.

#### The Provender

Meals are a flat 4 gp per night if you're not staying at the inn. Sack luncheons for eating on the trail are also available for 3 gp each. This buys you a cold version of the eveningfeast,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>The other three inns in Noanar's Hold are the Hunter's Horn, the Stag Under the Moon, and the Old Fox's Delight. Each one is owned by all of the wizards. They all offer the same basic fare and conditions—and the same lady escorts.





wrapped in a few pieces of old cloth, all stuck in a canvas sack.

Meals are always game, augmented by round loaves of hard, black nutbread, cheese, and pots of smoked, spiced riverfish. The latter is a salty mixture of all sorts of old, strongsmelling fish, ground together. It's made by local families who sell it to the few who like it for 2 cp per handpot.

The game one eats consists of whatever has been brought in, but always follows a pattern. Fowl is served first, accompanied by cabbage and greens. Small animals follow, such as rabbit, ground rodents, fox, and the like. they're often served with a white sauce, or cooked in red wine. Unusual animals are next (beaver, wolf, manticore, etc.), and then the

main meats (elk, bear, owlbear) follow. The finisher is jellies (mint, cranberry, and sloeberry) and the boar. At least one boar, roasted whole, is brought in. Its tusks are painted black to match the name of the inn. It is accompanied by trays of steaming meat, cooked in a thick gravy gleaned from the drippings of everything prepared in the inn kitchen. It is usual for diners to fall asleep, groaning at the tightness of their bellies, in their chairs at the end of a meal, or stagger to their rooms for a snooze. No food is allowed in the rooms.

#### The Prices

Rooms in the Boar go for 4 gp per night, meal and bath included. There



is no discount if you forego either. Although stabling is included, feed for each mount is 5 cp extra. Your meal includes a carafe or pitcher of whatever you prefer; extra drinks are 1 sp for a glass or tankard, or 1 gp for a bottle, regardless of your choice. There is no tenday rate.

#### Travelers'Lore

The Boar is famous for a grisly legend. <sup>58</sup> An adventurer staying at the Hold recognized a fellow guest as a wizard and former colleague, and demanded the return of some money owed him from long ago. The wizard responded by paralyzing him with a spell, polymorphing him, and then having him cooked and served in place of the boar at the end of the evening meal.

There are also rumors—heard mainly in Waterdeep-that the inn is furnished from several old, overgrown High Forest keeps, dating from the centuries after Netheril fell, when many wizard lords built fortified refuges. Much treasure, the tales go, was also found in these keeps. Mostly this included items and apparati of strange magic, items that the finders feared and could not master. These are said to lie in vaults hidden under trapdoors and accessable by secret passages from certain rooms of the Boar. They're supposedly just waiting for someone who dares to master them. 59

# Rassalantar

When traveling north of the City of Splendors on the Long Road, the first real settlement you'll reach is Rassalantar. It's a farming hamlet named for its founder. Rassalantar is a popular caravan watering stop, but the everpresent fog and the nearby bog make it an unpleasant stopover for those who must camp off the road.

Rassalantar is little more than half a dozen walled farms, centered on a spring-fed horse watering pond. The pond drains into a stream to the east. This then empties into the Stump Bog, a sprawling, desolate marsh haunted by monsters. It's also used as a convenient corpse disposal site by brigands, thieves, and dishonest Waterdhavians. There are many rumors of sunken treasure in its murky waters, but those who plunge into them would do well to remember that danger is never very far away.

An age ago, the warrior Rassalantar built a keep just west of the present settlement. This keep is now in ruins, but the ruins are often used for shelter by visiting tramps, dopplegangers, and less savory monsters.

West of the pond is Keep Woods, a narrow but dense strip of gnarled trees. This forest, located between two farms, cloaks the ruins of Rassalantar's original keep.

Rassalantar itself is under Waterdeep's protection. There are 60

<sup>59</sup>Elminster refused to say anything about this at all.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>Elminster says the legend is true, but the wizard was one of the Hunt Lords, of course, not a fellow guest. All that he will say about the Hunt Lords is that "they're a problem whose time will soon come."



guards quartered in their own barracks here. The barracks are found off the road, well behind the inn. The guards themselves patrol the Long Road from the gates of Waterdeep to a cairn a half-day ride north of Amphail. They rotate back to duty in Castle Waterdeep once a month, but the officers over them do not. Rather, the officers are veterans who know the surrounding country very well. 60

# Places of Interest in Rassalantar

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#### The Sleeping Dragon

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Across the road from the pond, on the east side, stands the Sleeping Dragon, a good inn. On dark nights, or in the fog that often cloaks the pond and the stream, you can tell you've reached the inn when the hooves of your mount drum on the plank bridge over the stream. The bridge is just a pace north of the inn. The innkeeper, Thrun "Spider" Samallahan, is a close friend of Durnan of Waterdeep.

Local rumor whispers that one of the girls who works in the Dragon is really a (gold?) dragon, hiding in human shape. Thrun scoffs at this, but the rumors never go away for long.

# RedLarch

Red Larch is a waystop town of roughly 600 folk. It's about a sevenday ride north of Waterdeep. Red Larch stands atop a long, low ridge that serves as the westernmost edge of a region of monster infested hills. The ridge was crowned by a landmark brilliant red stand of larches, but the trees were felled long ago by the town's first settlers.

Today, Red Larch is a busy trade town. It's the site of the local farmers' market, as well as a large and successful wagonworks, a buckle and lock factory, and a cattle market that attracts buyers from all over the North, and all down the Sword Coast.

Red Larch is also known for a nourishing, though unspectacular, table staple: savory crumblecakes. These are moist loaves of nuts, chickpea mash, chopped roots and greens, and turkey and wildfowl scraps, all baked together. They are wholesome trail food for the traveler.

Crumblecakes can be bought from locals for 1 to 3 cp per loaf, depending on the size and amount of meat. The local inns also serve them, accompanied by various strong sauces, and usually fried onions or gravy.

Three trails intersect the Long Road at Red Larch. One runs southeast through an area of small farms and ranches to Bargewright Inn; a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>The city guards of Waterdeep stationed in Rassalantar are all F1s or F2s who fight in chain mail with shields, lances, long swords, hammers, and daggers.

They are led by a civilar (captain). He is Gheldarm Tassor (LN hm F5); he is assisted by two armars (sergeants), Blaskos Ulraven and Timmer Longschal (both LN hm F3s).



second winds west through the hills to Kheldell, and the third runs east into the hills, to several abandoned, monster-haunted keeps. The keeps used to belong to adventurers and local ranching communities along the Dessarin.

Currently, Red Larch is awash in rumors of a sinster force that strikes by night from the nearby hills. Some say it's drow reaching the surface.

# Places of Interest in Red Larch

#### Shops

Alaglath Chansyrl Sklaen Jhavander Ogmoth Tarnlar

Harnessmakers



Harnesses for teams of various sizes are sold by a number of craftsmen around the village. All three of the above-mentioned craftsmen make their own wares for use with Thelorn's wagons (or an adventurer's own), and they can create or alter harnesses to suit a customer's needs.

## Mhandyvver's Poultry

Poultry Shop



Red Larch has several poultry-houses where fowl, fresh eggs, and even chicks for rearing can be bought. The latter are an unwise purchase, as typical loss rates while traveling are eight in 10. Turkeys, chickens, and even clip-winged ducks are raised in these sheds and runs. The best is generally considered to be the one run by Oskler Mhandver. Small boys are hired to shoot foxes, hawks, owls, weasels, and other predators approaching the runs. The practice they get gives Red Larch a militia of about 100 skilled archers; orc raiders have learned to avoid the town.

#### **Oneshield Quarries**

Quarry

Red Larch is also home to a skilled dwarven stonecutter, Jarth Oneshield. Jarth is always in need of mercenary warriors and adventurers to guard his dwarven and human workers when they're cutting stone in any of four quarries in the hills east of town. Jarth's prices are high, but his work is good, as is the pay he gives his employees.

#### Thelorn's Safe Journeys

Wagonworks

The wagonworks sells wagons for a stiff 150 gp each, but they're of the highest quality. The oak is treated to resist fire, and the assembly is equipped with two spare wheels, short and long trails, and a tow bar for hitching up a second wagon. The ready-to-buy wagons are kept from the weather in a huge shed. Thelorn, a grimly capable ex-



mercenary, <sup>61</sup> always likes to have at least a dozen wagons in stock. He can also make wagons to custom specifications in a tenday, but such special orders cost up to 175 gp per undercarriage. Thelorn once made a seaworthy sloop on wheels, but it took a month and he charged 4,500 gp for it.

#### Taverns

#### The Red Larch Rambler

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The Rambler is well-known. It's a large, well-lit place, decorated with hanging plants. Families and respectable folk come here to drink and chatter. If Red Larch has a daily public gathering place, this is it.

# The Helm at Highsun



The Helm is a dim, quiet place, frequented by caravan guards, adventurers, retired folk, single folk who want to be alone, and merchants who want to relax. "No one bothers you in the Helm," they say. This motto is enforced by a silent, attentive, and menacing helmed horror. <sup>62</sup> It's an empty, animated suit of armor that serves as waiter, usher, bouncer, and

sometimes, cloak rack. The horror is known as Araldyk, and it is under the mental control of the Helm's owner, a mage named Yather Indaglol. Most patrons of the Helm have never seen Yather. He keeps to his locked chambers, which he shares with a pseudodragon familiar. He runs the tavern using wizard eye spells, a speaking-tube, and a staff of a dozen skilled workers.

#### lmns

Red Larch has two inns. Both are two-story buildings of stone and timber. They both run parallel to the Long Road, on its west side, and both have two covered porches along the front-one for each floor.

#### The Blackbutter Inn



The more southerly of the two inns is the Blackbutter Inn. It is named for its founder and former owner, the fat, jovial local legend known as Barglun Blackbutter. Barglun died some eight winters ago while fighting off wolves, but he's still fondly remembered around town. Currently, the inn is run by Dhelosk Quelbeard, a thin, laconic man from southern Amn. Dhelosk is always interested in news from afar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>Thelorn is an LN hm F11 and a skilled wheelwright. Locals believe that he has considerable wealth hidden somewhere under his fortified house in Red Larch. Specifically, there's talk of an undercellar that can be reached only through one of the three chimneys. Thelorn also has money invested in his business and in real estate holdings in Waterdeep. He's assisted in business and in his home by an unshakeably loyal band of 15 workers (all fighters of lesser levels and skilled carpenters as well).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>For details of a horror, see module FA1 Halls of the High King or the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set.



# The Swinging Sword

iii baaa

The northern inn has a round turret that looks like it belongs atop some grand castle. It marks the location of the Swinging Sword, the sometimes rowdy, casual inn of Red Larch. It's a favorite of adventurers and others who consider themselves folk of action. It's also popular with the local professional escorts, who can be found here most evenings. The Sword is a place where the thoughtful staff sees to the needs of guests almost as if they read minds. Baths are ready for the filthy, warm chairs by the fire for the chilled, and those who need to hide things-or themselves- in a hurry will find a beckoning chambermaid at their elbow.

The inn is old and dark, and it's full of secret passages and storage closets. There are also plenty of mice, and cats that chase them.

The inn is run by two elderly, earthy sisters who love to hear tales of adventure and pranks. Surprisingly, both are minor sorceresses who can defend themselves with a *lightning* bolt or fireball if they must. <sup>63</sup>

The Sword has a loyal clientele that goes out of its way to stop here when north of Waterdeep. However, the inn also faces dark mutters from some of the locals, who think it attracts danger to the town.

There are rumors that a *gate* (or *gates*) to other, far-off places in the Realms is hidden somewhere in or near the Swinging Sword. Currently, the tales speak of connections with the Moonshaes, the Vast, and the Tashalar, near Chult. Strange folk do certainly seem to show up at the inn, too. <sup>64</sup>

# Triboar

This town of 2,500 stands at the intersection of the Long Road and the Evermoor Way. It's located due west of Yartar, its traditional rival. It is widely known as the marshalling place of over a dozen human armies, hastily assembled at various times in the last century. These were armies that came together to battle orc hordes sweeping south down the River Surbrin from the remote mountain fastnesses beyond.

Triboar's name is thought to have come from a traveler's tale of slaying three boars here in the same day, over 300 winters ago. This tale is commemorated in the banner of the lord protector of Triboar, which shows three black boars running toward the head of the banner on a blood-red field.

The regular militia take turns serving as the Twelve, a mounted police patrol force. They rotate in tenday-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup>The co-owners of the Swinging Sword are Jhandlatha and Peieyrie Taskaloath. They're originally from Luskan, where their father was a wizard and a foe of the Arcane Brotherhood, who killed him. Jhandlatha is an NG hf W9, and Peieyrie (pronounced *PEER-ee*) is a CG hf W8. They inherited magical items, but Elminster isn't sure just what

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>When asked about this, Elminster merely remarked dryly that if he heard about such things, and had "even a pinch of wits," he'd certainly think there was agate about.



long shifts. If needed, Triboar can muster a well-armed militia of 50 in a night, and 300 by highsun the next day. These numbers may be greater if adventurers or large caravan contingents are in town.

The ruler of Triboar, the lord protector, is elected by the people to command the militia and to settle disputes by adding to, altering, or striking down the Lord's Decrees (the laws of Triboar). For the last 40 winters, the lord protector has been Faurael Blackhammer. He is now gray-haired, and in constant pain from old wounds, but Faurael still stumps around tirelessly, training the militia.

Caravan masters can buy just about anything that a caravan might need in Triboar. One can buy locally bred horses (mountain ponies are a specialty), premade or custom made harnesses, and wagons. You can even get a veteran guide to take you wherever you want to go in the North. The best guides charge 7 gp per day, plus food and expenses. They require a down payment of 77 gp before departure. The guides also wear magical teleport rings, belts, or earrings that only work when secret passwords are uttered. This is to whisk them home in the face of treachery. Most guides are very sensitive to treachery, and will avoid getting into situations where they can be ambushed or overpowered. Guides have been known to slip away or to employ rings of invisibility to vanish, and then stalk their employers to see what is said and done, especially if their employers are adventurers headed for known ruins or caves opening into the Underdark.

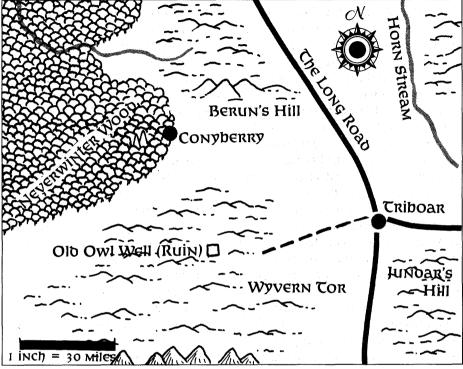
Many of the long-established guides are former or semi-retired adventurers. They may have their own bands of henchmen, their own secret plots and contacts, and their own magic items gained during previous adventures.

The most famous of the guides in Triboar are Zandever "Nighteyes" Evredanus, Morth Fartheen, Ilrin Sharadin and Borth Jhandelspar. Zandever is famous for guiding warbands through deep woods at night, to strike back at raiding orcs. Morth is said to always know what direction he's facing. Ilrin has acquired a sinister reputation; some think him allied with drow and worse. Borth is a jovial barbarian who often goes berserk in battle. When he was a youth, he was cast out of his tribe and adopted by a family of Triboar. He's famous for striding through a blizzard one winter clad only in boots, loincloth, and sword, singing lustily, to bring news from Yartar to a snowed-in Triboar.

When Borth and Zandever heard I was writing this guidebook, they were delighted. "Bring in business, that will," Borth said. They both hastened to give me trail advice to keep future clients alive long enough to get to them.

Zandever deals with a lot of wealthy and powerful Waterdhavians. He tells those with access to magic to wear a *ring of warmth*. "If you can't get one," he says, "bring a *ring of fire resistance* instead." Keeping warm when armed with such a ring is a





simple matter of gathering enough wood to lay two or three large bonfires. Lay the fires, then bury your belongings. Light the first fire and lie down in the flames at its heart, and get a good warm sleep. If the fire burns out, and cold wakes you, relight it, or move to the next fire and light that.

Borth shook his head at such magic-strong advice, and gave advice on keeping a normal fire going through the night when one doesn't want its flames to show from afar. When it's burning well, with lots of fuel set aside for later, cover the whole thing with damp sections of turf, cut up from the ground. The fire will burn underneath all night long.

The turf will stop giving off white smoke when it has dried out.

I thanked both guides, and take the opportunity to do so again now. It is a pleasure to travel the North in the safety of their company.

It should be noted that nowhere is the sometimes violent rivalry between Triboar and Yartar more sharply evident-than between guides of the two places. If a guide learns that a client has run with a guide from "the other place," he might just refuse to guide them.

The bad blood between the two towns has led to armed skirmishes. Whenever citizens of both places are under the same roof anywhere in the North, you can expect a brawl.



Guides won't start the fights, but they will abruptly leave the inn or tavern, taking their clients with them, if possible.

Treasure talk in Triboar always centers around the Lost Guide. This is a fellow who disappeared alone somewhere between Triboar and Yartar. He was running a wagon loaded down with sacks of gold pieces. Each town blames the other for his murder and the disappearance of the gold. Others, however, think his bones lie in the Dessarin, the gold with him.

# Landmarks

Triboar is a bustling mercantile town. It is busy night and day, hence its nickname the "Town Where Only Gwaeron Sleeps." Triboar has no walls. It is, however, surrounded by the paddocks and fenced workyards of two caravan outfitters, a horse market, stockyards, and two caravan camping grounds.

The center of Triboar, where the roads meet, is a huge open space. This is used as a market by local farmers and visiting peddlers. The space is dominated by the two story Tower of the Lord Protector, a simple stone keep that leans decidedly to the east.

Triboar is home to the most famous wagonmaker in the North, Skulner Wainwright. It is also said to be the resting place of a god—Gwaeron Windstrom, the Tracker Who Never Goes Astray. He is said to sleep in a stand of trees just west of

the town. Gwaeron, patron of rangers, is also known as the Mouth of Mielikki. He speaks to most mortals on her behalf, if direct speech is necessary. He sometimes can be seen walking into or out of the trees known as Gwaeron's Slumber. He appears as a tall, muscular man whose long, white hair and beard whip and billow in an endless breeze, even if there is no wind.

Rangers who venerate Mielikki often visit Gwaeron's Slumber to pray, but there is no shrine there, and Gwaeron never appears to those who come seeking him. It is said that worshippers of Mielikki who sleep in this wood will receive some hint of what the goddess wants them to do in their dreams. If the worshipper is not a ranger, the person will gain a once-in-a-lifetime, day-long ability to track as a ranger does. To avoid angering Gwaeron, there are laws in Triboar against cutting any wood from these trees or hunting any creature in the woods. The local militia patrols the forest to prevent orcs, trolls, and other such creatures from camping there—but less intelligent monsters have never been seen in Gwaeron's Slumber

# Places of Interest in Triboar

# Shops

Most of the shops and service establishments in Triboar open onto the market.



# The Cart and Coin Ransor's Open Road

Caravan Outfitters



These two shops are places that swap or sell horses and draft animals, sell feed and gear, and hire out caravan guards. 65 There's a brisk under-thetable trade among those on the job assignment roster in caravan guard certification tickets. These tickets establish a potential guard's order in the waiting list for assignments, and designate that a hiresword has undergone a certification interview for trustworthiness. These chits are not infrequently stolen, sold, bartered, or given to others, so they do not necessarily fulfill their original intended purpose.

# Foehammer's Forge Uldinath's Arms

Forges

The forges of the dwarven master-smith Ghelryn "Goldhand" Foehammer (Foehammer's Forge) and the human swordsmith Aldener Uldinath (Ukdinath's Arms) are situated across the road from each other at the northern edge of town. The two are friendly rivals, and each produces an astonishing amount of good quality forgework of all sorts. Their goods are sold across the North and up and down the Sword Coast. Their prices

are a shade under the usual, <sup>66</sup> but the metal and workmanship are better than most. Their pins, nails, latches, and eyebolts make possible the success of the various independent wagon repairmen of Triboar, and the famous Skulner Wainwright.

#### The Triboar Travelers

Caravan Company



Merchant sponsors can hire this local caravan company for runs to Waterdeep and back, for 600 gp each way, plus 25 gp per wagon over a base of 10. Runs to Everlund and back are 800 gp each way, due to the greater danger, plus 30 gp for each additional wagon above 10. The company uses only hired mercenaries and adventurers as guards, paying 4 gp each day plus food and drink. Guards also receive a bonus of 25 gp each upon arrival of all caravan goods at the destination.

# Wainwright's Wagons

Wagonworks



Skulner Wainwright's shop is located just east of the central market, on the south side of Evermoor Way. It has its own stockade, its own storage sheds for lumber, and its own horse-driven sawmill. The apprentices make a good amount of money running odd bits of wood through the saw.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup>These outfitter's guards come from a roster of ticketed hireswords. They've come to Triboar, applied for work as a caravan guard, and been interviewed while a wizard uses *ESP* on them. If they're judged to be fit, they are given a chit and lodged in barracks on the site, to await clients.

<sup>66&</sup>quot;Usual" means those in the Player's Handbook.



Skulner is known for his innovative designs. His latest is the rolling cog, a massive wagon that can double as a barge. One is currently in use on the Dessarin, but Skulner has so far failed to make one big enough to carry a good number of cattle, and small enough to avoid running aground on riverbend sandbanks.

Despite growing competition from such worthies as Thelorn of Red Larch, Skulner's wagons are still the wagon of choice for the wealthy Waterdhavian nobles. With prices starting at 175 gp per wagon, none but the wealthy can afford to buy from him. Nonetheless, Skulner is so busy building new wagons that he doesn't bother with wagon repairs anymore. Instead, he will airily direct owners of injured wagons to one of the many independent repair shops of Triboar.

## Restaurant

## The Pleasing Platter

The Pleasing Platter is next door to the grandiose Everwyvern House, and it has adopted similar pretentions. The tables are far apart. Each is screened from others by cleverly placed plants, statues or pillars. Minstrels play softly and soothingly in the background. Service is fast, polite and deft, with changes made swiftly

and obligingly to suit a guest's culinary preferences. This makes it one of the best places to eat in the North.

I dined on quail smoked with applewood, and then cast away a reckless 16 gp for a roast of sizzling panther meat-prized highly by gourmands of the North. This was followed by rothé steak cooked in wine and nuts. Next came venison, mountain mutton served with pickles and a spicy sauce, silvertail (the large salmon-like fish of the coldest northern rivers), sipping salvers<sup>67</sup> of wild turkey broth, and finally platters of grouse and smaller wildfowl, as well as hares and the tails of beavers.

It was one of the best meals I've had anywhere. To make sure by appraisal was fair, I went back the next night and did it again. One of the locals had warned me that it was all show. "When the winter snows close in," he said, "the Platter goes back to ale, hot broth, sausages, and hardbread for the locals, and a 2 cp fee for roasting fowl or game brought in by a guest."

#### Taverns

# The Talking Troll



The Troll is what Waterdhavians would call a dive—a dim, smelly, low-beamed place crammed with mas-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>These pewter vessels come on their own trays. They are usually full of a broth, stew, or a dessert of cream and chopped fruit afloat in a sherry or other fortified wine. They resemble, from what Elminster showed me, our own gravy boats. They're shaped for pouring, with a mug-like handle. The diner lifts the spout to his mouth, tilts the salver, and lets swallows of the semiliquid food down his throat. A cloth napkin is usually provided on the tray for catching chin-drips.



sive, battered, old furniture and notso-massive, battered, old drunks. Its one redeeming geature is its large cellar of various ales, stouts, and lagers.

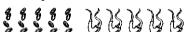
### The Triboar Arms



This is a stalwart, middle-of-the-road tavern frequented by people who would never willingly go into the Troll and would pay more not to have to. In Waterdeep, this tavern would be unremarkable. Here it's valuable as a place where you can see the neighbors you're drinking with and not recoil at the sight of them.

### lnns

#### **Everwyvern House**



Gondyl Ilitheeum runs an elegant, expensive place that caters to the nobility and to those who want to parade grandly and pretend they're noble. This is also the working home of Triboar's most elegant lady escorts. The snobbery of Everwyvern House is matched by its elegant frippery. It's like a parody of the grandest Waterdhavian noble parties. Folk come here to be awed by it, to be amused by it, or to feel at home in it. Whatever your reaction, it's worth a visit, at least until you get thrown out by the smoothly efficient bouncers. Minstrels play quiet background music among floating plants and many-hued driftglobes, while startlingly gowned

women and dashingly sashed and ruffled men chat, stroll, dance, and sneer at each other. It must be seen to be believed. More than a few folk in Triboar think that the back rooms of the inn are the center of local slave dealing and trading in various other banned goods. <sup>68</sup>

# The Frost-Touched Frog



This is a fun, noisy place full of old, mended furniture and colorful clients. The proprietress is Alatha Riversword. Its walls are decorated with hunting trophies, and its patrons love to regale guests and each other with tales that grow taller with each telling.

#### Northshield House



The proprietor is Dlukasz Phorndyl. He keeps a clean, formal, quiet place. Accommodation and service here are equal to the best of Waterdeep, but so are the prices.

#### Six Windows



This is a chilly, creaking, old, wooden rooming house that has about 40 more windows than the name would indicate. The proprietress, Jaunda, has an attic full of old clothes and gear left behind by clients as payment or by guests who never returned. She's always willing to sell some of this "treasure."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>More than a few folk are right in their suspicions, Elminster hinted strongly.



# Westbridge

This waystop village of 450 folk stands where the Long Road meets the trail west from an ancient dwarven holy site, the Stone Bridge. The origin of the village's name is obvious.

Westbridge is a farming center, complete with a market, a stockyard, and grain warehouses. The latter are protected from brigands and monsters by a stout palisade and a hired guard of 20 archers. Of course, there's also an inn. All of these locations are owned by one person, a halfling called Ghaliver Longstocking. Ghaliver is an enterprising investor, and he's also great at manipulating the merchants.

The Longstocking Yards are in the center of Westbridge, on the east side of the Long Road, just south of the trail to the Stone Bridge. Cross that trail and you'll find Ghaliver's inn. Cross the Long Road, and you'll be at the restaurant. Basically, this intersec-



tion is where anything of interest might occur in Westbridge.

The village also has a small winery that makes forgettable reds, a farrier (a person who shoes horses-poorly), and several capable carpenters and fencebuilders. It's a good place to stop over, but there's not much to see if you stay.

# Places of Interest in Westbridge

## Restaurant

# The Wemic Comes to Westbridge

The unlikely name of this eatery is displayed in metallic red letters on a signboard that depicts a rearing, weapon-brandishing wemic. The establishment is run by a short, cheery, bustling woman named Helisa Ithcanter, formerly of Baldur's Gate. The Wemic is a sunny, plant bedecked place with a small menu, but the dishes served are perfect.

I'm told that in winter, things shrink to a starvation menu of pickled fish, salt pork, parsnips, hardbread, sausage, pickles, and various sauces. However, I visited it in the fall, and had a feast. I began with thick, succulent green turtle soup, served with pyramids of crumbly biscuits drenched in melted butter. The biscuits came with long, slender, silver forks for dipping them into any or all of three silver dishes: soured cream, brambleberry jam and green quimble-fruit preserves.



When that was done, the main dish was served. I had spiced catfish from the lower Dessarin. These are huge, gray fish with very fine, pink flesh. They came to the table steaming, and adorned with light parsley cream.

Dessert included a choice of various pies and tarts. I left the table several hands thicker around the belly—and glad of it. Highly recommended.

#### lnn

# The Happy Halfling



The Halfling is a cozy, informal place with lots of rugs and squishy arm-chairs and cushions and warming fires in mini-chimneys. It's highly recommended as a place to get some sleep, or just to relax.

# XanTharl'sKeep

This fortified village of 475 or so folk has few attractions, but any traveler using the Long Road should know its ways and location. This is particularly important in winter, when desperately hungry wolves and orcs grow bold in their raiding.

Xantharl's Keep stands on the west side of the Long Road, where the road

emerges from the Crags to skirt the Lurkwood and then turn south. Xantharl himself was a capable ranger who explored and mapped the Khedrun Vale, known today as the Valley of Khedrun. He also explored the Fell Pass, and the Surbrin Highlands to me east. Though Xantharl is long dead, his battered hold remains.

The Keep is a small settlement of tall, narrow stone houses with heavy shutters and steep roofs to shed snow. The village has two deep wells. One is in the cellar of the keep, and one is in the open market space in front of the keep gates. The Keep's only inn and tavern are also located in the market, directly across from the keep itself.

The village has grown up around the frowning bulk of the keep tower. The structure can hold 400 warriors in a pinch, but 150 is a more comfortable number. There is a standing village garrison of 16, as well.

The whole area is encircled by a stone wall bristling with giant multiple crossbow guns. This, in turn, is protected by a *wardmist* visible only during the night. In the darkness, you'll see it as a faint blue-white band of *faerie fire* illuminating the ground all around the wall. The ward is actually in force at all times. There is a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>These consist of wooden frames on which a dozen or more heavy crossbows have been mounted. The frames are hung with rusty old shields and scraps of used armor in order to ward off incendiary attacks. The aim of each crossbow is set with a screw clamp, and they're all fired by pull-strings that can be jerked simultaneously by a single gunner.

The crossbows do normal damage. They gain a little on range due to their height (S10/M18/L26). However, they still have to be reloaded and wound seperately. With a large, experienced crew, they can fire as fast as once a round; with fewer or less able gunners, the rate of fire drops swiftly.

There are 200 quarrels at each gun, with more in the keep armory. Some of the arrows have been dipped in pitch and are ready to be lit and fired aflame.



gap in its ring where the short road from the single gate of the Keep runs out to join the Long Road. The gap is concealed by a *continual faerie fire* spell cast so as to match the rest of the *wardmist*. Anyone intruding into the ward without a ward token will be set upon by 16 bonebats. These skeletal defenders are never activated or seen by beings using the road.

Xantharl's Keep has no ruler, though a local ranger, Helder Mornstone, dwells in the keep itself. He's a veteran who knows every rock and tree for several days' ride around the Keep. He also commands a guard of 15 men-at-arms. All of them wear pendants set with the ward token of the Keep. In battle, they're hidden under their throat gorgets. This

garrison is split into three shifts. When the keep is not under attack, one shift is off duty, one is strolling the streets to keep order, and one is on patrol around the Keep, watching for caravans, suspicious travelers, monsters, and signs of weather or beast migrations.

Helder also leads the local militia, which turns out for two days each month for training with the garrison. Once each ride, two militia members will ride on patrol with the guard for a stretch of two days. Helder is concentrating on training the young boys and girls of the Keep to be competent scouts, and to be aware of potential dangers in battle. They must also be aware of the needs of the warriors, so they can





help out in a fight. Helder is also trying to make marksmen out of them, having them fire endless volleys from the crossbow guns on the walls. They also make and repair quarrels. Most of this youthful militia are good shots with the wall weapons, <sup>70</sup> though Helder hopes they'll never have to use them.

All in all, Xantharl's Keep is a secure stopover, but not an exciting place to visit.

# Places of Interest in Xantharl's Keep

Tavern

The Falling Orc

This is where the villagers gather at night for hurl-dagger, cards, and tall-tale-telling. It's warm and smoky, as the wide hearth gives most of its smoke back to the taproom, not up the chimney. Nonetheless, it's a good place to sit and listen. Locals don't like smart mouths, but they do like to impress travelers with the happenings of the northern wilderlands. Keep quiet, and listen hard, and you'll hear tales of adventure, treasure, peril, and the inevitable bad jokes ("He had a little battle wi' somethin' he et-but then, he was always goblin! Hehheh!").

Don't get into a fight here—a lot of locals have blistering fists, and they

like to gang up on outsiders. A favorite tactic is to snatch up one of the old wooden buckets they use as footstools, jam it down over some combatant's head, and then punish the rest of his body in a hurry.

There is a local legend that the tavern is haunted by a ghostly lady in an ornate and sensual gown. By the vivid descriptions I was treated to, it sounds like it's a garment of the richest and most frivolous height of fashion in Netheril just before its fall. The lady appears seldom, but always late at night. She almost always chooses a human male adventurer and leads the hero down into the tayern cellar. Here, she gestures toward a large, ornate, electrum-plated key that hangs from a rafter on its own chain. If the adventurer takes the key, she gestures imperiously for him to follow her again. She then strides back up the stairs, out the door through the village gates, and into the night.

The tale goes that she wants some treasure or other that belongs to her. It needs to be rescued from a crumbling, forgotten tomb somewhere east of the Keep, across the Long Road. The key must be used to unlock a particular crypt, they say. The truth of the matter remains a mystery, as those who follow her seldom return. The ones who do come back decline to speak of what befell them, and the key is always back in its place in the morning.

 $<sup>^{70}</sup>$ There are about 50 boys and girls, all F1s with 6 hp or less. Consider them to be THAC0 17 with the crossbows, but THAC0 20 with anything else.



#### INN

#### The Bear and Black Buckler



The Keep's inn is a clammy, dimly lit place where all the beds have bear pelt covers for warmth. Unexciting meals of mixed-meat stews and various spiced and seasoned potato dishes are served here daily.

# Yartar

This fortified town of 6,000 folk stands on the east bank of the River Surbrin. It's connected to a fortified bridge and a citadel on the west bank. The bridge carries the busy<sup>71</sup> Evermoor Way across the river, linking the Long Road with the Interior.

Yartar is always buzzing. Caravans are always coming and going. Goods are always being shipped from the caravans to the many freight barges. The fisherfolk of Yartar are always scouring the Three Rivers (the Surbrin, the Dessarin, and the Laughingflow) for catches of catfish, coldwater crabs, freshwater eels, silvertail and shalass. All of these can be bought fresh daily from stalls in Yartar's central market.

The west bank of the Surbrin is the site of the Shield Tower, home to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup>Busy in winter, Elminster amends,





Shields of Yartar. These are 150 mounted town guards who police Yartar and fight off frequent orc and troll raids. The Tower has a strong inner wall and a crumbling outer wall. The ring of bare ground between them is filled with pit traps, rubbish, and a ward<sup>72</sup> to which guardian skeletons are linked. Just outside of the tower wall are paddocks for the use of caravans and drovers selling or moving horses and livestock.

The Tower has its own dock, which is always heavily guarded. The dock is roofed to protect barges from the weather. Under this cover, the visitor will probably find the Waterbaron's Barge. This metal-armored, ramequipped monster can carry 200 warriors. Crossbow guns<sup>73</sup> are mounted on its decks, along with barrels of water and buckets of sand to dampen fires from enemy incendiaries. Its side armor is fluted and chased to show off the skills of the local bargewrights, whose work is the chief source of income for the town. On more than one occasion, pranksters from the rival town of Triboar have.

stolen or defaced the barge. Nonetheless, the warboat has proven its usefulness in several hard fought battles against large orc bands.

The ruler of Yartar, the Water-baron, is elected for life. The person who held this office for the last two decades was Alahar Khaumfros. However, he was recently revealed as the leader of the evil Kraken Society. Four illithids walked into the baron's stone hall, and calmly slaughtered Khaumfros for his treachery in Society monetary dealings.

Reaction from the Harpers and the Lords' Alliance was swift.<sup>74</sup> Today, the Waterbaron is Belleethe Kheldorna, a female paladin dedicated to Tyr. She's busy rooting out the agents of the Kraken Society who still infest the Shields and the merchant council.<sup>75</sup> She's also grappling with the difficult business of maintaining law and order in an often roaring trade town frequented by many adventurers and maverick merchants.

The first time visitor to this bustling town always finds his way to the noisy, crowded, market area in front of the Waterbaron's Hall. Known

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup>Only Overswords (officers) and the Waterbaron (commander) wear ward tokens, but there is one hanging on the inner gate of the Tower. It's placed there to permit townsfolk safe entry, but it can be whipped away in case of attack. Spare tokens are locked away in a chest somewhere in the Waterbaron's chambers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>For details of these weapons, see the footnotes for Xantharl's Keep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup>Elminster says that the Lords' Alliance and the Harpers were very disturbed by a magical item worn by Khaumfros and spirited away by his slayers. It not only fooled all alignment-detecting and mind-reading magic, it also replaced the masked thoughts with others tailored to the assumed alignment and alliances!

Most of the Kraken Society's most important agents have eluded the hunt so far. Elminster says that the evil organization is still very active in the Sword Coast lands.

Many folk across the North have now heard of the Society and have an idea that it's an evil, dangerous network of killers, spies, and fell creatures such as mind flayers. That's about the extent of what the average Northerner knows on this subject. However, the taverns house some wild and colorful speculation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup>According to Elminster, one of the founding reasons for the Kraken Society was the need of the bargewrights for constant employment. For years, certain agents of the merchants of Yartar have carried on a practice of destroying barges up and down the Three Rivers. They'd do their work at night, leaving orc bodies or weapons to suggest that the deed was done by raiders.





# Yartar

- 1. The Waterbaron's Hall
- 2. The Market
- 3. Halassa's Waterwell & Fine Wines
- 4. Winter Winds
- 5. One Foot in the Boat
- 6. Hasklar's Arms & Armor
- 7. The Wink and the Kiss
- 8. Esklindrar's Maps, Books & Folios

- 9. Firelust Fabrics & Tailoring
- 10. Dannath's Pickles, Nuts & Foods
- 11. Beldabar's Rest
- 12. The Cointoss
- 13. The Whitewings Griffon
- 14. The Pearl-Handled Pipe
- 15. The Happy Hall of Fortuitous Happenstance



locally as the Fishyard, the market always has fish on sale. Even in the depths of winter, ice fishermen bring their wares to stalls here.

The market is a maze of stalls. Many of them sell fresh catches from the Three Rivers, while others offer every trinket or small item that can be imagined. Here, you can find crystal bottles filled with perfume brought from far Mulhorand, Durpar, or Calimshan. You'll see magical potions, amulets, and spellcasting components of great rarity and power that's "guaranteed by the gods." There are always things to see at the market, but make sure you leave time for some of Yartar's other establishments.

Most overland travelers make use of Yartar's caravan services. There are places for horse trading, wagon sales, repairs, and rentals, and outfitting. and provisioning shops. However, the two things Yartar is most famous for are the Happy Hall of Fortuitous Happenstance, a major temple of Tymora; and the Shieldmeet, an event that draws thousands of people every four years.

During the three years between Shieldmeets, Yartar hosts the Hiring Fair. Outcasts, bandits, homeless, isolated landholders, and most adventurous Uthgardt barbarians gather on the Shieldmeet site. This is a vast, flat field just north of the town. Here, those who need bodyguards, miners, farmhands, scouts, builders, grooms, guides, and the like try to find employees to their liking.

The Hiring Fair is a time of much crime and brawling; buying and sell-

ing of armor weapons, and stolen goods; and covert exchanges of funds and information, amidst all the bustle. There are also usually one or more wizardly duels.

It's not unusual for adventuring bands to be formed at the Fair by a few ambitious and unattached adventurers, or for wealthy folk from all over the North to come looking for adventurers to solve their problems. These tasks are known as "slaying the local dragon," whether that's what's actually called for or not.

Except for torches around the edges of the stone hall of the Waterbaron, and a few signal lights on the river, Yartar is dark at night. If you want to see where you're going, you have to carry your own torch or lantern, or hire a light lass. By tradition, these are young local girls who know the streets, and they'll show you your way.

Yartar is a bubbling cauldron of plots, grand schemes, cabals, alliances, and under the table business arrangements. Everyone in Yartar is after money, or power, or preferably both, and they'd like it in as short a time as possible.

There is a local thieves' guild, known as the Hand of Yartar. However, it's continually riven by feuds, power struggles, and corrupt double-dealing, so, in effect, every thief operates for herself or himself. Most of the professional thieves in Yartar are female. Most thieves are young, too. Once you can't outrun an enraged mercenary, your stealing days in Yartar are over. At least, they will be,



as soon as you get the point (usually belonging to a broad sword).

Yartar is too big and changes too quickly for every corner of it to be treated in this guidebook, but I'll deal with a few central landmarks and highlights.

# Landmarks

The Happy Hall of Fortuitous Happenstance is the local temple to Tymora. Built like a fortress of grim, forbidding stone, its arched windows look down on the town from the temple's own small hillock. Locals often call it "Two Hap Fort Hall," or just "the Two" for short. Run by High Priestess Velantha Waerdar, the temple has a policy of sponsoring adventuring bands to guard it. The bands are also asked to go out and stir things up in the North, aiding those whom the priestess favors, rescuing lost or weakened caravans, and coming to the aid of other adventuring bands whose luck has run out.

Adventurers may stay here for free for nine nights at a time. During this time, they will be fed and accommodated by the clergy. A longer stay, or healing aid, requires payment in the form of service to the temple. This service is almost always an adventuring foray; efforts sponsored by this temple keep Uthgardt barbarian raids to a minimum.

The Waterbaron's Hall is the grand residence of the ruler of Yartar. Here, the Waterbaron also holds court. Rooms are provided for merchants dealing in commodities or making

proposals for the future good of the community and feasts are thrown for important guests. The hall is rich with marble stonework, valuable tapestries, and high, echoing chambers. Its long, overhanging, peaked roof is held up by two ranks of pillars that march down both sides of the Hall. Here, visitors will pass several stocks for holding prisoners who've been flogged. Even these items are ornate—they're carved in the shape of stone lions. At the end of the colonnade, a flight of broad marble stairs leads into the grand chambers. Servants' quarters and kitchens are below, as are all manner of secret passages, linked to the meeting rooms above.

A ward on the Hall prevents blood being let within the building. This means sharp-edged or piercing weapons can't do any damage. Maces and spells govern all violence here. The ward has no known tokens.

# Beldar's Rest

Inn



This is perhaps the most unusual human-built inn in the North. It's located underground, beneath Yartar's central market. It was created by linking together the cellars of old warehouses.

# The Place

The first part of Beldabar's that you'll see is the gatehouse. This building is





lit by an ornate lamp that holds seven thick candles. To be accurate, it's not much of a building—it's really little more than a weather shield for the stairs that lead down into the inn's circular common room.

Beside the gatehouse is a roll-up gate, <sup>76</sup> and behind that is an earthen ramp that leads down to the inn stables.

The common room is rather large-probably 120 feet or more in diameter. The room is home to the innkeeper's desk, a bar, and dining tables and chairs. From this room, passages radiate out like the spokes of a wheel. One hallway leads directly into the vast, low, pillared warehouse that is now the heavily guarded

stables. Other passages lead into areas that have been converted into large, bare, damp sleeping rooms. The whole underground area is softly lit by pale mauve and brown driftglobe lamps.

# The Prospect

Service in Beldabar's is discreet in the extreme. No one will bother guests unless they strike the alarm gong of their room, or go to the common room desk.

Beldabar himself is a burly, handsome ex-adventurer. He cultivates a dangerous atmosphere, and the curious guest may hear the occasional clash and skirl of steel,

<sup>76</sup> Elminster says that we'll recognize the slatted wooden gate from very similar ones found all over North America.



the crack of a lash, or a scream of pain from behind the closed room doors.

Much drinking, gambling, and barter goes on in the Rest, away from the public scrutiny of the town above. To keep brawls and bloodshed to a minimum, the common room of the Rest is open only to guests.

Patrons can be expelled from Beldabar's for creating any fire, molesting inn staff, practicing Slavery, theft, or drawing steel in anger (except in self defense). Otherwise, anything goes, from games of tag in the dark to drunken brawls raging all over the common room. Not surprisingly, the inn staff includes many former or semi-retired adventurers who are ready to handle most trouble.<sup>77</sup> Beldabar also keeps many cats, who prowl about the Rest hunting rats. For purposes of patron behavior, they count as "inn staff."

Adventurers and rough-and-ready frontier folk love the atmosphere of the Rest, so the place is usually busy. It's also cool in summer, and easy to heat in winter. Stable straw can be requested in the sleeping rooms, so on the coldest nights, many travelers wrap themselves in a blanket and burrow into a heap of straw for a snug, warm slumber. Every room has a bar that can be used to keep its door closed from within, but every room also has at least two secret entrances, known to the staff.

# The Provender

The only drinks available are a thick, sweet, green wine, made by Beldabar himself, and a dark, strong ale. The house wine is known as sloegreen wine. It's rather like zzar without the almonds, but it's definitely an acquired taste. The ale is stronger than most brews, and has a burning, smoky taste. Drinks can be delivered to rooms or served at the bar in the common room.

Simple but marvelous fare is served in the common room. Skewers of sizzled chicken hearts are a favorite. They're cooked over flames, and under a gentle rain of red wine. The thick lentil, rice, and onion soup, flavored by a secret amphigory of hot spices, is also popular. Adventurers often order repeated servings of steak, kidney, and mushroom pie. Many purchase lamb sausages packed with herbs, to eat on their travels. Potatoes here are chopped and fried, then topped with a white sauce of chives, sour cream, and parsley. Hearty eaters sometimes call for a mash. This is all of the above dishes mixed together in a stew, and covered with a crust of thin baked potato and cheese, over which is ladled the white sauce. Dark, crusty bread rolls are served on the side. A bowl of this is as big as a warrior's greathelm. Some northerners even call this dish "warrior's brains." It's usually enough for the largest person, or three light eaters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup>There are usually 25 or so adventurers on staff at any one time. This usually includes at least one F10, one W9, a P7 (almost always of Lathander, Selûne, Sune, or Tempus), and a T8.



# The Prices

Rooms at the Rest are 1 gp per person per night. This includes stabling and bedding.

Sloegreen wine is 2 sp for a tallglass or 8 sp for a bottle; the ale is 4 cp each tankard or 1 gp each handkeg.

A foot-long skewer of chicken hearts is 6 sp. The lentil, rice, and onion soup is 4 sp for a bowl, which is about a foot across and four inches deep. A steak, kidney, and mushroom pie is 9 sp, and a foot-long sausage is 3 cp. Potatoes are 2 cp for a plate, and rolls of bread are 1 cp for three. A big bowl of mash costs 1 gp.

# Travelers'Lore

The Rest has a smuggler's door that opens onto a cavern dock on one bank of the river. There are many hidden entries and exits connecting to various locales around Yartar. Notably, there are tunnels to the Shadowskulk alley, and to a small courtyard at the east end of town known as the Kissing Court.

There are also rumors of secret doors leading to deeper halls. At least one of these may lead to an ancient, abandoned, dwarven citadel that in turn is linked to the Underdark. This may be used by drow who come to trade in slaves. There are said to be traps waiting around the Rest for the unduly nosy,

and, from time to time, skeletons or impaled corpses are found in concealed passages in and around the Rest. There are also long-time legends about a wererat colony and an illithilich (an undead mind flayer) that lurks under Yartar, preying on those who venture away from the safety of the central Rest.

# Others Places of Interest in Yartar

# Shops

Dannath's Pickles, Nuts, & Foods

Food Store



Alukk Dannath runs a shop specializing in foods that are practical for travelers in the North, yet are in scarce supply. Typical items in his store are dried apricots, figs, and garshells from the Tashalar and the lands around the Lake of Steam. Prices are high, but the food is good. Anything in danger of spoiling is detected by the expert proprietor. Such goods are then converted into some other form. For example, overripe fruits might be added to a wine or syrup mash.

Dannath himself is a short, bristle-bearded, red-haired man who sees with the aid of two thick monocles. He keeps the shop with the aid of his three strong, quiet daughters.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup>One of Dannath's daughters is adopted. All are capable fighters (F6s to F14s), and all are Harpers. Beleaguered members of that organization can find aid and a hidden sanctuary in cellars beneath the shop. These rooms have access to passages running far under the town and rising in the Wink and the Kiss festhall, among other places.



# Esklindrar's Maps, Books, & Folios

Bookshop



This is the home and shop of Esklindrar, a sage whose expertise is the written works of humans in the Sword Coast area from earliest known times to the present. No less an authority than Elminster of Shadowdale referred to the feeble. white-bearded, doddering, ascerbic, old man as having "the best mind for books this side of Candlekeep." If it isn't in his shop, Esklindrar has probably at least seen it. He probably even remembers where it was and what it looked like. For a paltry fee of 500 gp per query, he will give enthusiastic, pedantic answers on the spot, pointing out locales if need be with his wooden pointer on the detailed map of Faerûn that adorns the ceiling. 80 His "pointer" is a staff with its head carved into the likeness of a pointing human hand.

The dusty, musty old shop probably contains a thousand treasure maps and more, but woe betide the thief who would steal from or threaten the old sage. He is under the protection of Alustriel of Silverymoon, who has laid two spells on Esklindrar. The book dealer is protected by a spherical wall of force whenever he wills, and he can cause a blade barrier to erupt from any book or scroll he has handled, even if

they have been taken away from his shop!

Further, the shop is warded. There are no tokens; the ward merely prevents all fire and explosions from occurring, magic or otherwise. Fiery missiles are snuffed out as they enter, for example.

# Firelust Fabrics & Tailoring

Tailors

Firelust Fabrics is a shop run by the jolly, deftly skilled Firelust family. All of them are tailors of the first rank, from white-haired grand-dames to fat and tumbling youngsters. Their prices are high, but the work is worth it. They are renowned for whipping up costumes in scant minutes when a client demands it. Family members descend in a whirlwind around the customers and reclothe them where they stand!

# Halassa's Waterwell & Fine Wines

Spirits Shop

Halassa's is a shop run by a short, sharp-tongued old lady who seems to know everyone in the North. She can be seen most days giving strangers salty advice as if she were their worldly grandmother. Halassa has never gone adventuring, or even traveled far from where she was

 $<sup>^{79}</sup>$ Elminster had this to say about Volo's citation: "Well, at least he quoted me correctly, which shows that he can do so when he wants to."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup>This map is as good as the maps at the front of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Atlas.



born in Yartar. Nonetheless, she has learned to stomach almost all of the drinks that humans, dwarves. gnomes, halflings and elves make.81 She sells most of them, too, at fairly standard prices that are quite reasonable for this remote a locale. Most of the selection is stored in deep cellars that spiral down around Halassa's deep well, and the whole setup is guarded by many locked gates. Her stock has astonished many a traveler, but locals are more appreciative of the one free bucket of water a day she'll give each of them from the deep well. The water is always sweet and cool.

## Hasklar's Arms & Armor

Armorer



Halaskar's shop contains possibly the finest variety of high quality armor and weapons in the North; it's certainly the best on public display. Hasklar prides himself on having at least one of every metal thing that can be used by a single person engaged in warfare. However, some of his single specimens are of odd sizes, or limited usefulness.

Hasklar keeps three particularly useful items in heavy stock. He has gorgets (throat protectors) with keyor coin-sized inside storage pouches. They're favored by many thieves because of the number of lockpicks one can hide therein. He also has throwing knives with needle-sharp points at both ends, and nonreflective, black handles.<sup>82</sup> Finally, he stocks bucklers with removable center bosses, which can be used as conical shields around lances or ropes. The gorgets go for 4 gp each, the knives for 6 gp each, and the bucklers for 1 gp.

Hasklar is not a smith, and has no local metalworker to call on. Therefore, he doesn't provide alterations to his wares, or do custom orders. His prices would be considered high even among nobles in Waterdeep, but everything he sells is of the best quality. Thieves are discouraged by two magical, animated weapons that have been known to pursue thieves for days if need be. Hasklar is often heard to talk to the empty air and listen intently, as if holding conversationshe may well share his shop with a ghost.83

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup>Halassa is an NG hf F1, but over the years, she has acquired a great resistance to poisons and intoxicants (+6 on all saving throws). Unless she's drinking almost pure alcohol, she'll become uncomfortably full before becoming impaired in any way. Many foolish visitors betting against her in taverns have learned this to their cost. Her standard prices are those in the Player's Handbook and those of Aurora or the wine sellers of Waterdeep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup>Consider these knives to do 1d4+2 piercing damage (1d3+1 to L-sized targets). They also have a ROF of 3 per round, with ranges of S1/M2/L4. Each knife weighs one-fourth of a pound. Two such knives can be locked together at their midpoints to form an X-shaped weapon that is spun through the air or wielded by twirling in battle. Three can be locked together to form a caltrop (any damage done to a being forces a Dexterity check and a Strength check; both must be made to avoid falling).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup>Elminster says it's a watchghost—a powerful undead, detailed in the *Ruins of Under mountain* boxed set. Those lacking that source should use a stronger, nonturnable wraith. The watchghost is devoted to Hasklar and loves to maim or dismember would-be thieves. There are actually three or more undead spirits haunting the shop, but the others remain invisible. They wield the "magically flying" weapons that avenge Hasklar on all thieves.



#### Winter Winds

Clothiers



This clothes shop is run by Felassal and Thuorn, two arguing brothers from Baldur's Gate. They constantly moan and complain about the primitive conditions of the North as they drape customers in stylish, but expensive cloaks, boots, furs, wool smocks, tunics, socks, leggings, and mufflers. Though they'll rarely agree on anything, their taste is good.

Prices are typically 5 gp per garment above the standard prices, but the customer with coins and patience enough to be swarmed all over by these two is likely to emerge looking quite wealthy and cultured. The two brothers rarely forget a face, and usually greet returning patrons.

#### Taverns

#### The Cointoss



The Cointoss is a mediocre tavern. It's an average sort of low-beamed, smoky, poorly lit place with stout wooden tables and benches. It's usually occupied by locals as they steadily (or unsteadily) drink the night away. The Toss is favored by Yartarrans as a place relatively free from intrigue and noisy visitors—neither are welcome.

The place gets its name from a helm hanging over the bar. If a patron

manages to toss a coin through the eye slit of the helm, he or she gets the next glass free. This doesn't happen often. Shields behind the helm and a large bowl beneath await all the misses. The proprietor, Tanataskar Moonwind, Soloves to hear tales of adventure. He will even neglect the running of the bar to sit and hear them. His heart is really set on adventuring, not pouring drinks and dragging drunks to the door, or breaking up fights.

#### One Foot in the Boat



This is the sort of tavern that is always too noisy and too crowded to be as good as you remember it being, but it always shines in memory, and it always smells exciting. I think adventurers come here to plot how they're going to change the Realms, and then they go out and do it! It's worth a trip, just to say you've been there. It seems to impress peddlers all over the North, and native Yartarrans, too. If you're lucky, you'll overhear something that may lead you into adventure, or at least give you something to talk about on other nights in other taverns.

#### lnns

# The Pearl-Handled Pipe

!!!! BBBBB

This is simply an excellent inn. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup>A PC trying the toss should roll 2d20. One is a Dexterity check, which must succeed. The result on the second d20 must also be 8 or less for the coin to go inside the helm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup>For Tanataskar's secret, see Appendix I.



owner and keeper, Elladuth Myristar, loves good furniture and cozy decor, so she spends her spare time making or acquiring more. Caravans carrying finecarving, tapestries, and furniture always stop at the Pipe to sell Elladuth all she has room for.

She can't say no to a nice-looking chair or bed, so she has a long attic crammed with unused furniture. Elladuth is constantly adding new rooms to the inn, just so she can set up the furniture. The last I was in, the Pipe could sleep over 600 guests in comfort and privacy.

Each room is different, but all are as luxuriously appointed as the studies and offices of most wizards or minor rulers. Parchment, quills, and ink await the use of every guest. The inn has bathrooms and bucketflushed garderobes. There are full eveningfeasts (roasts with sauces and vegetables), highsunfeasts (pickles, cold sliced meats, cheeses, and savory pastries), and morningfeasts (eggs, fried breads, and bacon and/or fried fish). Meals are served in the first floor dining room. Folk who aren't staying at the inn can eat meals in the dining room, but they pay 1 gp per meal plus drinks for doing so.

This is the best place to stay in Yartar, and one of the best in all of the North—without a lot of grand airs or formality.

# The White-Winged Griffon





The Griffon is an old, creaking wooden house that threatens to come down during every high wind or storm. It lets the chill of the North blow right through the bones of the roomers inside during cold winter weather. Known as the "Whitewings" to locals, it has the sole virtue of being cheap: rooms are 1 cp per night. All the rooms are small singles, with thin partitions between them. More rats than people live in the place, and the plumbing consists of chamberpots that are emptied out of back hatches into a noisome cesspool.

There is only one bath in the place. It's a tub full of lukewarm water, warmed only by stones taken from the hearth. The use of the bucket of graysoap powder costs 1 gp. The Whitewings is run by a pair of mumbling, toothless old brothers who shamble about with mops and greasy rags, and seem too sleepy and decrepit to notice anything. 86

#### FesThall

#### The Wink and the Kiss



This is a well-liked festhall of gaudy decor, warm scented baths, and gilded draperies. Informality, fun, and easy camaraderie are encouraged here, though rowdiness is actively

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup>To this Elminster says: "Don't ye believe it. They're both Zhent informers. And the also sell some of what they see and hear to more local sinister concerns, such as the more organized thieves of the Hand. *Always* beware of toothless old men — like me!"



discouraged by Asklar and Beldorm, the two bald, seven-foot tall brothers who own the place.  $^{87}$ 

The Wink is a labyrinthine place of small rooms, secret passages, hanging curtains, secluded galleries, and so on. There's even an actual maze, sometimes used by large parties interested in amorous fun.

Those with discreet business are advised not to discuss it here, because every wall is apt to have more than one listening ear close to it. This is as much protection as it is nosiness. On more than one occasion, the ready concealment offered by the maze of chambers has been used as cover by killers stalking victims.

The Hand of Yartar has declared this festhall safe ground. No feuds may be pursued here, and no weapons may be drawn. The brothers have recently instituted a practice of having guests leave all weapons, clothing, and gear in safe storage as they enter the Wink. Visitors are asked to don fanciful masked costumes instead. This has become a fad in Yartar that threatens to spread across the North. Already someone has worn a stolen costume while robbing and slaying in the alleys of Yartar.

# Alleys

The Long Creep Mindulspeer Lane Thorn Lane Dead Cat Cut

IIII.

Shadowskulk Spitting Adder Lane

BBBB

Sixty years ago, Yartar was called "a pit of angry vipers" by the the late sage Dalcass of Baldur's Gate. The town obviously hasn't changed much in the last six decades. There are many places where an intruder is viewed with suspicion, and other places where a visitor is just a tempting target.

Many informants, bodyguards, escorts, errand runners, and dealers in potions, poisons, and shady goods live along such walks. Thorn Lane is congested, day and—especially—night, by professional escorts and their companions. A local bit of humor has it that this is where Yartarrans go to "improve their cultural relations."

To avoid these spots, don't take any shortcuts down anything narrower than two wagon widths. If, for some reason, you *want* to find any of these alleys, just ask any Yartarran. As one might expect from trading folk, they're open and approachable, quick to volunteer or trade information, and always ready for a chat. Note that names, places, and passwords of weight often carry a price.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup>The brothers are warriors from Mulhorand. One is an F14 and the other an F12. They only run the place. It's actually owned by the ladies and men who work there, hence its relaxed conditions and comfort.







# The Coast



he Coast was the first part of the North to be inhabited by civilized people. It consists largely of gently rolling

grassland. Sometimes the land touches the Sea of Swords in a pebble beach, but it more often meets the water in a series of sea caves, broken rock spits, and low cliffs marked by sea stacks. (These are pillars of rock severed by the tireless waves.) This terrain lends itself to smuggling, but it also forces ships that navigate close to the shore to be small and of shallow draft, and therefore they are vulnerable to the driving onshore storms that often pound the area.

The opposite side of the Coast area is a boundary of extensive woods, mountain ranges, or hilly regions. These high lands wall off the large Dessarin river system from the sea.

The most prominent city of the Coast is Luskan, which has long held an evil reputation as a cruel pirate stronghold. The less aggressive Neverwinter is larger and more cultured. Two lesser ports are Leilon and Port Llast.

Thundertree (a logging hamlet inland from Neverwinter) and Phandalin (a largely ruined village inland from Leilon) are much smaller. I didn't get a chance to visit them, so they're only covered briefly. You will find information on them in the section of this book entitled "Other

Places of Note in the North."

Phandalin is the best preserved of the many ruined keeps and villages scattered along the Coast. Most are little more than heaped stones, or graves and cellars largely hidden by grass. Many shelter predatory beasts or passing adventurers. (This reminds me of an old Coast joke: The way to tell adventurers from other predatory monsters is that adventurers swear more often.) Some sages call the Coast south of Neverwinter the Twilit Land. A surprising number of adventurers have made their fortunes among the ruins. The easily found riches seem to be gone now, but there are still many tales of goblininfested underways in the hills and of keeps high in the mountains that are haunted by wyverns and vampires.

One sight the Coast traveler should not miss is the Place of the Unicorn in the hills northeast of Leilon. The place can be found only at night. Wizards of the Coast believe that it lies in another dimension, reached only by a moongate (a magical gate that operates only in moonlight). The Place is Sacred to Lurue, the unicorn of the Beast Cult. It is a stand of trees whose leaves are brilliant blue, surrounding a bluegrass meadow. Beings who rest therein are healed of all diseases, poisons, curses, and insanity. Unicorns (only) are also healed of physical damage. Beings who have no faith or are wavering in their beliefs often see



Lurue herself in the trees, and their reaction may reshape their lives.

The Mere of Dead Men, meanwhile, is a region to be avoided by all but foolhardy adventurers equipped with water-breathing magic and looking for a lot of battle practice. It's a vast salt swamp infested with insects. It's also home to will-o-wisps, lizard men commanded by liches, and even more fearsome creatures.

The Mere has grown in recent memory, swallowing several farms and small holdings along the road, which has been relocated to skirt the bog. Merchants who regularly travel the High Road often ride for three days and nights straight in order to avoid camping near the Mere.

Several rich castles and manor houses stand flooded in the Mere, with only their uppermost spires and battlements showing above the dark, still waters. Here sunken riches and powerful magic await those mighty enough to take it. Of course, these riches are guarded by darktentacles1 and other fell creatures. Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun of Waterdeep advises adventurers that certain of these flooded places (Castle Naerytar, Holk House, Mornhaven Towers, and Wolfhill House) have their own mythals<sup>2</sup> These allow certain spells to be cast at double strength, and other spells are

negated entirely. These effects can only be discovered by trial, for all relevant records have been lost.

A report from Varleth of Neverwinter (now deceased) says portions of the High Road itself have mythals, so the spells of a mage who stands on the sunken road are affected.

Bandits often inhabit the ruins of Iniarv's Tower east of the Mere. The Tower is a fortress haunted by the phantoms of fallen warriors. The hills around are roamed by orcs, bugbears, kobolds, leucrotta, and other dangerous creatures. Self-styled bandit lords such as Amalkyn the Black and the wizard Helduth Flamespell have recently established holds in the hills. Finally, dopplegangers dwell in some of the ruined villages and hamlets, taking the shapes of humans to lure weary caravans and traveling bands to their doom.

# Leilon

Southerners usually learn the name of this town from maps, and pronounce it *LEE-lon* or *LAY-lun*. Northerners have always called it *LIE-lon*. This is one way to identity a southerner in the northern wilderlands.

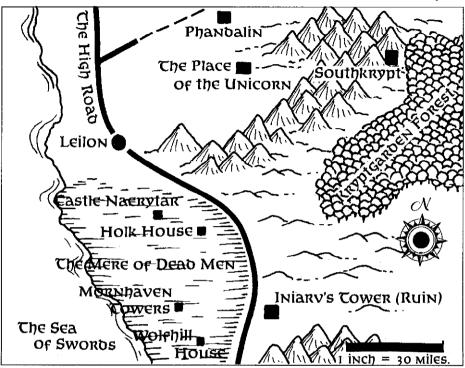
This mining town of 3,000 folk is a firm ally of Waterdeep. Its ruler, Lord Pelindar Filmarya, keeps it within the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A monster detailed in the *Ruins of Under-mountain* boxed set. DMs lacking this source should use giant octopi (see MC2). However, these have 12 HD, double the number of tentacles, and they're surrounded by a permanent anti-magic shell.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>These powerful, permanent magical fields were used in Myth Drannor, Netheril, and other elder human kingdoms. A mythal is detailed in *the Ruins of Myth Drannor* boxed set.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Lord Pelindar Filmarya is of mixed Waterdhavian and Tethyran noble blood. His father's side of the family was once renowned in Tethyr for the prowess of its battle knights. Lord Pelindar is an LG hm Pal (of Tyr) 15. His wise justice and pragmatic battle mastery have won him wide respect in the North. The phrase "Fear the knights of Leilon" came from a joke about country bumpkins, but Lord Filmarya has turned it into a term of respect.





Lords' Alliance, and communicates regularly with Piergeiron of Water-deep.

Leilon consists of stout stone cottages with slate or thatch roofs, the latter being covered with a hardened slurry of mud. The houses cluster together within a crescent-shaped earthen rampart on the landward side of the settlement. The rampart has a ditch on the outside and a wooden palisade on top.

The town is guarded by the Lances of Leilon. This is a force of 200 mounted lancers skilled at firing crossbows from horseback. They are clad in chain mail, with shields strapped to their chests and backs. The Lances wield axes, daggers,

swords, light crossbows, and of course, lances. These fighters are always on patrol, seeking to minimize the raids by orcs, bugbears, trolls, and brigands.

The hard-working miners of Leilon concentrate on digging rich lodes of copper, nickel, and silver from deep mines in the mountains east of the town, though a few older shafts even descend from within the town itself.

The water near Leilon is shallow, with tidal mudflats extending a long way out from shore. Small bands of Leilonnar sometimes fish these with hurled nets. The mudflats make ship trade difficult. To overcome this, a dozen old, massive, battered barges have been magically protected against



fire and rot. They're poled out to meet ships, where rickety cranes attached to the high rear decks of the barges unload the cargoes. This can be done only in spring or summer, when the wind is low and the weather fair.

This perilous practice is being supplanted by large, well-armed caravans coming into town from Waterdeep loaded with food and finewares. The caravans sell enough to make room to buy some of Leilon's precious metal ores.

Leilon is a growing community. Lord Filmarya has established a shrine to Tyr in town. It stands beside older shrines to Lathander and Tymora.

The Cult of the Dragon and the Zhentarim are both reputed to be active in Leilon, and there are also dark tales of local cults who worship undead mages or spirits of the mine deeps.

An abandoned mage's tower, known as the High House of Thalivar, rises in the center of town. It is



guarded by its own ward. Details on the powers of the ward and the existence of tokens remain unknown. It is known, though, that it has guardian monsters, and they have so far proven deadly to all adventurers seeking to plunder the magic reputed to be therein.

# Places of Interest in Leilon

Taverns

The Knight's Goblet



The Goblet caters to travelers' trade. It is clean, boring, and overpriced. The proprietor likes to roast whole boars in the taproom's hearth and serves hearty, large, nutty-flavored loaves of bread with large slabs of the meat.

#### The Orc's Tusks



The Tusks is favored by locals. It is crowded, cheaper than the Goblet, and friendly. Its taproom is dominated by an orc's skull with large tusks upon which patrons are wont to hang amusing or embarrassing items.

#### lnn

The Sword of Leilon

This old, cozy establishment is a warren of small rooms inside. Guests



often get lost and blunder into each others rooms. (Sometimes they get lost intentionally.) It is built on the site of an earlier inn where Leilon's defenders used to gather because of the inn's size. That inn burned down due to misadventure, but the name of this inn hearkens to those days of local glory.

# Alley

# Manyclaws Alley

This is the only dangerous spot in town. It's reputed to be haunted by the ghosts of some trolls.<sup>4</sup>

# Luskan

The City of Sails is a proud and dangerous place, and an important port of the North. It straddles the mouth of the river Mirar. Despite the unnavigable nature of its swift, icy, and rocky water, the port of Luskan is the main shipyard for the mineral wealth of Mirabar.

Luskan is supposedly ruled by five high captains: Taerl, Baram, Kurth, Suljack, and Rethnor.<sup>5</sup> However, I suspect that the real power in Luskan is held by the Arcane Brotherhood, who dwell in a tower on an island at the mouth of the river.

The Brotherhood doesn't welcome visitors to this city of 16,000. In fact, anyone who doesn't appear to be pure human can expect to be slain on sight. Any humans who do enter the City of Sails are treated as thieves or spies. They are also followed constantly by agents of the Arcane Brotherhood. The Brotherhood usually assigns the task of following visitors to thieves and mages of little power but much ambition.

The seafaring merchants of Luskan have always been fierce, proud, and warlike. They carry on active, armed feuds with the inland city of Mirabar, the coastal city of Neverwinter, and the island realm of Ruathym. They sponsor pirates who prey on ships and ports up and down the Sword Coast. They also trade with Amn, Calimshan, and many other towns that prefer not to be associated with them, but will meet them on the neutral ground of offshore Mintarn.

Waterdeep's navy is constantly skirmishing with Luskanite ships because Luskan vessels have orders to harass any shipping that uses the ports of Neverwinter and Waterdeep, which Luskan regards as its chief trading rivals. When Luskan is officially at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The alley is actually haunted by nine heucuva Isee MC2). These are all that remains of a long-demolished temple to Loviatar. The monsters guard treasure that still lies buried beneath the alley in vaults long forgotten by the folk of Leilon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Baram is an Ne hm F15 (STR 17, CON 17). Kurth is a CE hm F18 (STR 18/44, WIS 17, CHA 17). Rethnor is an LE hm F16 (dual class: formerly a T7; STR 16, DEX 18): Suljack is a CE hm T13 (STR 16, DEX 18, CHA 16). Taerl is an LE hm F17 (STR 17, INT 17, WIS 17, CHA 17). All of these men are firmly under the control of the Arcane Brotherhood. They know it and are wise enough never to betray any irritation at their situation, enthusiastically following orders while serving as the official rulers of Luskan. The high captains are all experienced adventurers, pirates, and seamen, with long-term strategies for their lives. All have separately begun to dabble in magic for self-defense, anticipating a time when open disagreements with the Brotherhood will occur.



peace, its warships act as unsanctioned pirates. That is, the high captains supply, aid, and direct them, but pretend they're independent free-booters, acting in defiance of the law of Luskan. The pirate warships try to force all shippers to use Luskanite boats and to use Luskan as their only Sword Coast port of trade.

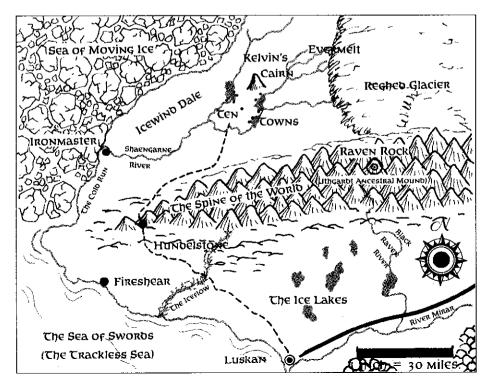
Luskan wages almost constant war against naval powers that the captains think they can defeat. They've been wrong in the past about Mintarn, Orlumbor, Gundarlun, Tuern, and Lantan. The latter was such a humiliating defeat that Luskanites won't speak of Lantan or even admit that it exists. Persistent talk of the Lantanna is likely to result in an attack from any

Luskanite. However, Luskan did crush Ruathym. Only when faced by the combined fleets of all the Lords' Alliance did Luskan relinquish control of that plundered realm.

When patrolling enemies make coastal raids difficult, the warriors of Luskan turn inland, attacking the miners of Mirabar and any Uthgardt barbarians they can find. These actions are performed just to keep their neighbors weak and respectful.

There are persistent rumors of an alliance between Luskan and the Zhentarim, but no word or clear sign of this has ever come to light.

The city has a standing army of 300 spearmen, and a navy of 19 dragonships, each armed with 70





archers. It is building more dragonships as fast as it can and has armed hastily in recent years, fearing retaliation from Waterdeep for the war with Ruathym.

Luskan's traders, it is rightly said, "always wear furs, haughty expressions, and ready swords." They can be found up and down the Sword Coast wherever trade is conducted in a port. They are dangerous folk, always alert and well armed. Their city remains the perennial trouble spot of the Sword Coast.

The Arcane Brotherhood keeps a close watch on visitors to the city. If one wishes to walk about freely, without spies in tow, it is advisable to enter by way of the sewers, in the hold of a Luskanite ship, or magically disguised.

# Landmarks

The Mirar River divides the city into two major parts. The northern section is a walled enclave, consisting almost entirely of warehouses. The southern half of the city is much alder. This heavily fortified section of the city is surrounded by outlying walled caravan compounds.

There are three bridges that connect the two halves of the city. They are the Harbor Cross, Dalath's Span, and the Upstream Span. The Harbor

Cross is broken into two spans, known as the Short and Long spans.

Five major islands crowd the mouth of the Mirar, and the three closest to the south bank are developed. I'm detailing these districts or islets separately for the convenience of travelers.

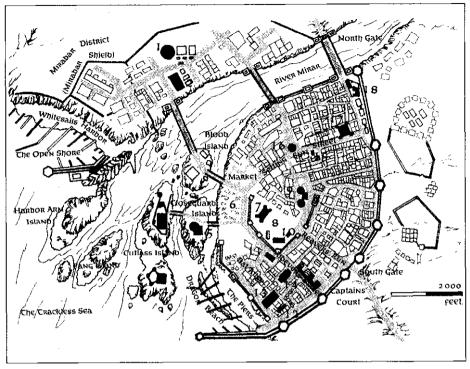
### North Bank

This warehouse district includes a fortified compound known as the Mirabar District or the Mirabar Shield. The area is owned and guarded by mercantile companies operating out of Mirabar. Two places here should be avoided upon pain of capture, torture, and then death. The first is Luskan's main watertower. called the Throat. It rises out of a fenced grazing area for sheep destined for the tables of the five captains. Any intruder seen in the fenced pasture is assumed to be an enemy of Luskan trying to poison the city's water supply. Guards armed with crossbows that fire paralyzation-venomed bolts will try to capture the intruder for ungentle questioning. Defiantly painting the sheep various hues used to be something of a rite of passage among dwarves in Mirabar, but this practice was bloodily put down by the Luskanites.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>This quotation is from a speech by the widely traveled Waterdhavian merchant Sammereza Sulphontis. He has, from time to time, acted as a sort of roving envoy for Waterdeep, and may have some special status in the City of Splendors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster says that those looking for Harper aid in Luskan should go to the south end of Dalath's Span and look for a Harper sign under a high window nearby. He adds that those who do this in a suspicious manner are likely to condemn the Harper agent to death as surely as they do themselves. In darkness, a Harper seeker should make the ululating bark of a seal. Non-Harpers who do this for fun are advised that such jokes are regarded as being in fatally bad taste.





# Luskan

- 1. The Throat
- 2. Red Dragon Trading Lodge
- 3. Host Tower of the Arcane
- 4. Sea Tower
- 5. Kurth Tower (High Captain Kurth's residence)
- 6. Ruins of Illusk
- 7. High Captain Taerl's Fortress (residence)
- 8. Captains' Close
- 9. Baram's Palace (High Captain Baram's residence)

- 10. High Captain Suljack's Lodge (residence)
- 11. Ten Oaks (High Captain Rethnor's residence)
- 12. The Cutlass
- 13. Temple of Red Sails
- 14. Hall of Warriors (Temple)
- 15. Seven Sails Inn
- 16. The Needle
- 17. Winter Palace (Temple)
- 18. Baliver's House of Horses (Stables)



The second area to avoid is crowded Whitesails Harbor. This is off limits to all except Luskanite naval personnel ("and other pirates," as the joke goes in Neverwinter-but don't repeat it here, if you value your head). Watchful garrisons in the towers at the end of the breakwater and at the upstream end of the northernmost island have instructions to shoot down any unauthorized people entering the harbor. They receive a bounty for each person struck, so they regularly shoot into the windows of the closest buildings in the fortified Mirabar District, hoping to make a little blood money.

The northernmost reach of the harbor, which is entirely unprotected against the full fury of sea storms, is called the Open Shore. It's the only place that foreign vessels are allowed to berth. The Open Shore docks are outside the city walls. Luskanites ignore brigand and monster raids there, but they don't bother firing at crew members, either.

The Mirabar District is situated between Whitesails Harbor and the rest of the mainland. It's firmly enclosed by high stone walls topped by iron spikes and thorns. Three major companies trade here: the Anvilfist Banner, Thalorin's Manymetals, and the Golden Hand. Between them, they can muster some 90 menat-arms<sup>8</sup> to guard the compound from Luskanite "accidents." (If my tone leads you to suspect this city isn't a pleasant place to visit, you've reached the right conclusion.)

Next to the water tower stands the Red Dragon Trading Lodge and warehouses. This area is home to Luskan's largest and most successful overland trading company. These folks are always well-armed and wary, but they're also wise enough not to behave as aggressively as their pirate brethren. The dangerous places they trade in, and the "challenge me" reputation of Luskanites always leave them short of caravan guards, so they welcome adventurers for hire. Typically, Red Dragon offers 4 gp per day, plus food, water, and one potion of healing per trip—though if the latter isn't used, it serves as the issued potion on one's next trip.

Also on the north bank of the Mirar is the North Gate. This is an ironclad door between two guard towers that stands at the water's edge. It guards the northern end of the widest bridge, the Upstream Span, that leads to the south bank.

It is around this gate that beggars lurk, and camp followers and peddlers not allowed into the city settle with their wagons. Luskanites in search of trinkets or information they'd rather not be seen acquiring go out to them. This gate is normally closed during the hours of darkness, but it's always guarded by 30 soldiers in chain mail and armed with spears, short swords, daggers, and crossbows. This guard is commanded by a veteran officer, called the Daykeeper or Nightkeeper, depending on the shift. He is assisted by a watchful wizard of the Brotherhood.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>F3s to F7s, all clad in scale mail or better. They're armed with longbows and heavy crossbows, pikes, long swords or bastard swords, maces, war hammers, and daggers.



Here, travelers who dare not enter Luskan can rent space on a barge cable-ferry that crosses the river upstream from the city. Be warned; the ferryman is said to have trapdoors in the bottom of the barge.9 Luskanite patrols guard both ends of the ferry run. These guards usually include a few junior wizards of the Brotherhood who are bored, ambitious, and anxious to prove their viciousness and worth. Enemies of Luskan rarely make a dry crossing, and more than one wet wizard has furiously fought his way out of a lightning bolt -hurling contest with the Brotherhood.

## South Bank

The main city of Luskan stands on the southern side of the mouth of the Mirar inside a semicircular wall. This wall extends from a fortified breakwater that shelters Dragon Beach to a tower beside the Upstream Span and across the bridge from North Gate. The wall is studded with over a dozen towers along its length, including the impressive Twin Teeth that flank the South Gate. This is all of Luskan that many unwelcome travelers see. It is customarily decorated with heads and other body parts of those who've fallen afoul of Luskanite justice. The grisly array is lit each night by a row of flickering torches.

From the gate, a wide street known as Reavers' Run leads straight northwest to the open space of the city market. From there, the Short Span leads to Blood Island, and then across

the Mirar to the Red Dragon Trading Lodge. In the market, stalls are erected by permit. Permits are only given to Luskanite companies, closely watched long-time business contacts, or outlying farmers. The dealers here sell mainly fresh produce, firewood, and trinkets. As a general rule, the western, seaward side of Reavers' Run is the bad side of town. For Luskan, this is saying something!

On the way to the market, Reavers' Run passes Captains' Close, a large, walled park on the west. This is where the palatial residences of the High Captains Taerl and Suljack stand. Taerl's house is a fortress, and Suljack's is a tavern-like lodge. Both men like to hunt deer in the heavily wooded park, armed only with javelins and knives. This bloody sport is sometimes watched by their admiring ladies.

Across the street from the Close, and a short block northeast, is a smaller, unwalled garden. Out of the center of this rises Baram's Palace. the home of a third high captain. A fourth high captain dwells in Ten Oaks, a tall stone house just southwest of the Close. Ten Oaks is a hollow square enclosing a hillock on which the 10 oaks for which it is named stand. Rethnor is the high captain who lives here. He spends much money on magic to keep the enclosed trees alive. Despite his wealth, they are slowly withering and dying, cut off from the sun and the rain. The last high captain dwells on one of the islands, so his residence

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>According to Elminster, this is all too true. "Luskanites," he warns, "love to arrange accidents."





will be detailed in a later section.

Most features of interest to visitors lie along the southern wall of the city. One block north of the wall is the Captains' Court. This is the palace from which the high captains govern.

It stands on Aldever's Street, facing the local temple of Tempus (called the Hall of Warriors). One can tell when Luskan is going to war by the lines of soldiers forced to march here in formation to pray. Tempus is said to be displeased by such enforced worship, and so demands rich offerings. It is widely rumored in the city that the occasional burglaries of this temple are arranged by the high captains. They allegedly do it to get some of

their money back, so they can offer it again. Aldever's Street is safe, by the way: Discipline is strictly maintained by Luskanite soldiers guarding the entrances of both the Court and the temple.

There are a number of dangerous alleys here, bounded by the Darkwalk. This road leads to the bridge from Closeguard Island. North of the Darkwalk, one will find the gloomy, forested ruins of Illusk. This is now a graveyard that stretches as far as the market.

Most Luskanites live in a better part of town. The main bulk of the city—everything northeast of Reavers' Run—is known as the Reach. It is a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Elminster says this is also true, and adventurers should beware of falling in with such schemes. The high captains love to capture the occasional patsy, and they exact savage and fatal punishment to demonstrate their piety.



place of small shops and tall, narrow stone houses with shuttered and barred windows. There are only a few places of interest here other than Baram's Palace.

One of these places is another watertower, called the Needle. It stands on the north side of Setting Sun Street, a major road that runs northeast from the market to another landmark, the white-spired Winter Palace.

The Winter Palace is a temple to Auril, the Frost Maiden. The rituals of worship to this deity are often cruel. Visitors gather to watch the "wet parades," a ritual where supplicants don garments packed with ice and drip their way along the streets. They journey between six white pillars known as the Kisses of Auril. These columns are spread widely throughout the Reach. The worshippers move from pillar to pillar, chanting prayers to the goddess, before returning to the temple. In winter, I'm told such processions resemble frantic footraces, with the added risk of exposure or heartchill. The wet parade runners are often cheered on by patrons who come out of nearby taverns to place bets on the stamina of the participants.

The Seven Sails Inn is the only inn in Luskan. It stands on the south side

of Setting Sun Street, two blocks east of the Needle. It's a place of surprising quality that is always closely watched by Brotherhood agents stationed on the premises.

#### BLOOD ISLAND

Occupied by Luskan's standing army, Blood Island contains a guardtower, an armory, and two barracks at the upstream end of the island. The roof of the tower is fitted with catapults that can hurl missiles into both harbors, up the river, and into the city itself

#### Closeguard Island

Closeguard Island can be reached by a short, arched bridge known as the Dark Arch. The span contains a hidden ward of some sort that warns of all non-Brotherhood intrusions. The rocky isle is home to Kurth Tower, the fortress residence of the most grim high captain of Luskan. 11 The guards stationed there also deny unauthorized access to Cutlass Island, which is reached by the Sword Bridge—another arched span with its own ward. This one is linked to battle horrors<sup>12</sup> that any member of the Brotherhood can call up to fight intruders on the bridge. Kurth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>All of the high captains' residences in Luskan have a house guard of two shifts of 20 men-at-arms each. All are F1s to F3s, clad in chain mail and armed with hand crossbows, spears, broad swords, and daggers.

Each high captain also has a bodyguard of 16 F4s and F5s that travel with him, clad in plate mail and armed as appropriate to the situation, up to and including pikes. The high captains themselves are all retired pirates, with great wealth and access to many magical items. All are known to continually wear rings of regeneration and teleport rings that take them either to their Luskan residences or to a hidden stronghold somewhere in the coastal mountains near Leilon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>These versions of the helmed horror are detailed in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Campaign Set* and in module FA1 *The Halls of the High King*. They appear as empty, animated suits of full plate armor.



Tower shares the island with some barracks, including a training facility, and a fortified guesthouse where "guests" of the Brotherhood can stay under guard or chained in dungeons below.

#### Cullass Island

This large isle consists of two rocky heights connected by a pebble beach. It has its own dock. The south end of the island is crowned by a weathered, massive stone fortress, the Sea Tower. This is Luskan's original pirate stronghold. This tower is now home to all lesser members of Luskan's ruling Arcane Brotherhood. This house of ambitious mages and nonwizard senior agents is often lit by the flashes of experimental spells late at night. Occasionally, it's the scene of a spell fight that sends transformed bodies hurtling helplessly out of the windows into the sea far below. It's not a place to willingly visit, unless you're a seller of spell components and mighty enough to fight your way clear in a magical battle with the entire Brotherhood. 13

The more northerly height of Cutlass Island is home to the large, walled compound of the Host Tower of the Arcane, from which the Arcane Brotherhood rules. The building resembles a giant stone tree. It's a place of fearsome magic that will be discussed in detail later.

### Fang Island and Harbor Arm Island

These two uninhabited islands lie to the north of the fortified trio; both are bare rock crags. Fang Island is named for its tendency to tear apart boats, rafts, and barges swept down the Mirar. Harbor Arm is the northernmost isle, and shelters Whitesails Harbor.

The Brotherhood has plans for building on these islands, but Fang Island is the site of a wild magic area created in a failed attempt to formulate an extremely powerful ward. From time to time, random harmful spells discharge there by themselves. Their bursts and radiances often rend the night. This wild magic area is self-generating and has so far defied attempts by even the mightiest mages of the Brotherhood to destroy it.

# The Ruins of Illusk

The remnants of the ancient city of Illusk stand on the southern shore of the Mirar, in the lee of Closeguard Island. All that remains to be seen of that once proud city are a few shattered towers and toppled statues enshrouded in creepers and choked with thick brush in the shade of a few old and gnarled trees. This small, thickly forested city block of half-visible ruins is bounded to the north

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Elminster clarified this a bit. The Arcane Brotherhood's magelings dwell in the Sea Tower. They're not yet powerful or capable enough to be accepted onto staff in the Host Tower. There are about 40 of them, all W5s or less. They're kept in line by a dozen W8s. There are always another 30 or so hopefuls hanging about, all W2s or W1s. All are of evil alignment.





by Luskan's busy market and to the south by the city's noisy slums. The Ruins are bisected by the Darkwalk, the street that leads to the Dark Arch. The Darkwalk is named for the haunted reputation that clings to the ruins of Illusk.

The ruins south of the Darkwalk are now largely cleared and used as a burial ground for rich Luskanites, who build mausoleums and dig their own crypts within its confines. Citizens are allowed to cut brush from here, mostly for firewood and herbal remedies. It's now considered ill luck to use any of the tumbled stone of old Illusk in a burial monument or building, but many of the older vaults incorporate carvings and pillars from

the ruins. Lovers and conspirators sometimes meet here by night, and ghosts are said to walk among the tombs and grand tomb sculptures. Some of these are occasionally found to be living, hungry gargoyles!

A reliable source<sup>14</sup> told me only harmless phantoms and more dangerous humans skulk about the southern ruins. The true undead danger is from the ghouls and wraiths of those who once dwelt in Illusk. These creatures are generally only found amid the thick brush and the old, stunted trees of the largely untouched northern ruins. They also haunt the partially flooded underground passages that link the crypts with Closeguard Island, as well as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>At this, Elminster coughed. "Yep, me. Humph! Note ye how he acknowledges sources?"



many cellars and sewer tunnels throughout Luskan, and even the Underdark. Access to the Realms Below is controlled by an ancient subterranean stronghold under the slums, where the Old Ones<sup>15</sup> dwell.

Fear of the magical traps 16 and guardian monsters, as well as the sleepless undead, has kept most of the buried dead and their treasure undisturbed. Spell books, scrolls, magical items, and rich gem caches have been recovered from the ruins. Almost all of the rich dead were buried in magical armor of one sort or another. The loss rate among graverobbers remains high, however. Luskanites have a saying: "Only the most desperate try to rob the dead of Illusk." Outlanders invading Luskan and fugitives from the city's rough justice have tried to hide in the ruins, but they are usually driven out or slain by the undead in short order.

Luskanites rarely brave the overgrown northern ruins even in the full light of day. There are persistent rumors of slave traders kidnapping folk and taking them below (a fate often threatened for unruly children by Luskanite mothers).

The edges of the overgrown ruins serve as a refuse dump for the market (mainly rotting produce) and the slums (mainly excrement and dead bodies). No known maps of the

underground chambers and passages exist, and no Luskanite will admit to knowing their ways.

# The Host Tower of The Arcane

The horrors of Illusk pale in comparison to the dangerous Host Tower of the Arcane. The Arcane Brotherhood is so terrifying that the pages of this entry have been enspelled to conceal the true nature of the text from beings of evil alignment. This has been done for your protection, esteemed reader, because the information herein concerns a most dangerous and evil organization.<sup>17</sup>

The Host Tower of the Arcane is the home of the Arcane Brotherhood. It's a magically created stone structure that resembles a giant tree or an open human hand. It rises into a central spire surrounded by four spires at the points of the compass. All are of equal height, and each bristles with many lesser spires, balconies, and branching turrets.

The Host Tower is surrounded by the Green, a lawn ringed with pines, onto which the stables of the Brotherhood open. A single path crosses the Green from the compound gate to the Tower.

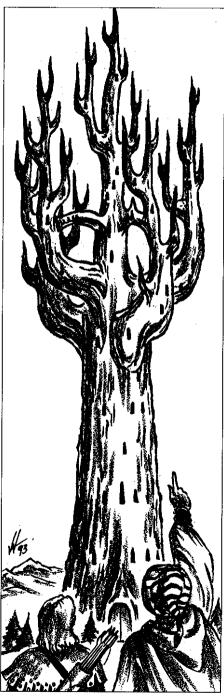
The Arcane Brotherhood is a mercantile company and wizards'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>See the section on the Host Tower for more about these fearsome beings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>The folk of old Illusk were fond of *spell triggers*, which unleash "hanging" spells when certain conditions are met, much like a *magic mouth* operates when its activation conditions are met. These triggers can also release stirges (see MC2), golems (see MC1), crawling claws (see MC3) or gargoyles (see MC2) from stasis to attack intruders. Common "hung" spells (in descending order of popularity) are *blade barrier*, *chain lightning*, *magic missile*, *lightning bolt*, and *flaming sphere*.

<sup>17.4</sup> Much too dangerous, and recklessly irresponsible, as usual," was Elminster's comment. He promptly entirely rewrote this section.





guild. It maintains several safehouses in Luskan and in other cities of the North, and at least one fortress somewhere in the mountains north and east of Luskan. The Host Tower, however, is the seat of its strength.

The Tower is a treasure house of spell books and magical items. It's guarded by basilisks, stone golems, and the wizards who reside there.

From a huge entry chamber, access to the upper levels of the tower is via a long central spiral stair. This staircase opens onto various meeting rooms, storage rooms, and spellcasting chambers.

The upper reaches of the central spire are occupied by the Archmage Arcane of the Brotherhood, and each of the other four spires is home to a mage in charge of a quadrant of Faerûn. Kitchens and teaching rooms are shared by all. They're found at the level where the spires branch out. Above these, each spire has spell practice and private teaching chambers, an audience hall, laboratories, storerooms, conjuring and meditation rooms, and the personal chambers of the wizards, with the more powerful wizards residing on the higher floors. The conjuring chamber of each Overwizard surmounts his or her spire. There are many traps, wards, and warning magics between the chambers of the various rival wizards.

Each Overwizard has his or her own staff of mages (who are ruthlessly trying to destroy and supplant their boss). An Overwizard's



staff usually numbers fewer than 18 wizards, but these wizards can call on a substantial body of magelings who dwell in the nearby Sea Tower.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Arcane Brotherhood

Hard information on the upper echelons of the Arcane Brotherhood is very difficult to come by. It is clear, though, that some of the senior wizards have recently been destroyed or trapped in forms from which they can't escape, communicate, or work magic. Some have been moved behind the scenes, and some have left the Brotherhood to pursue their own aims-lichdom, mastery in other lands or planes of existence, and so on. Some of the names in this entry are new to most observers in Faerûn. but it should be noted that current activities of the Zhentarim, the Cult of the Dragon, and the Red Wizards of Thay reveal that they haven't managed to place agents or even spies in any positions of importance within the Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood has been known to change with menacing rapidity, as its internal feuds tend to be deadly. Travelers are advised to avoid even coming to the attention of this evil, manipulative group.

**The Archmage Arcane:** The ruler of the Brotherhood is known as the Archmage Arcane. He is thought to currently be Queltar Thaeloon.<sup>19</sup> His

personal staff includes the "Wizard-killer" Galarth Ultashund. Galarth keeps order in the Brotherhood by slaying those who get too far out of line. He employs at least seven assassins, some of whom are skilled thieves, and at least two of whom are dopplegangers.

The Archmage is advised and aided (or, if he becomes too erratic or dangerous to the Brotherhood, opposed and undermined) by the Old Ones. These are senior mages of the Brotherhood who have gone behind the scenes or attained lichdom or some other state that removes them from normal human existence in Faerûn. The Old Ones usually take part in the affairs of the Brotherhood only as menacing, warning voices and occasional spell manifestations. Their true numbers, identities, and powers are unknown.

**The Overwizards:** Under the Archmage are the four Overwizards, each administering a quadrant of Faerûn: the Overwizards of the North, South, East and West.

The Overwizard of the North: The Overwizard of the North is Jaluth "Snakeface" Alaerth. She is under a curse or has a natural power that causes hissing, fanged serpents to erupt from her face when she is angry or upset. These can slay in their own right—she has often left a trail of the dead behind her during one of her rages. Her staff includes the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>These magelings number 40 or so W3s to W5s; they are normally ordered about in watch duties around Luskan by a dozen ward wizards, all W8s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Queltar Thaeloon is an LE hm W22 (DEX 18, INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Wizardkiller" Galarth Ultashund is an LE hm P12 of Cyric (STR 16, INT 17, WIS 18) and a known psionic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>The Overwizard of the North, Jaluth "Snakeface" Alaerth, is a CE hf W19 (DEX P8, INT 18, CHA 17).





wizards Galguth Shund and Cannather Vool of Calimshan.<sup>22</sup> They fear her as something inhuman.

Jaluth's plans call for the defeat or enslavement of the known dragons, seizure of Icewind Dale and, ultimately, control over all the mines that can be reached from it. She is also set on plundering dwarven holds and uncovering all the magic of Netheril that remains. She has, of course, her own private plans as well. She is known to be developing new necromantic spells of fearsome power, including a spell that allows her to control undead, golems, and gargoyles created or directed by others.

The Overwizard of the East: The Overwizard of the East is Ornar of the Claw.<sup>23</sup> He takes his nickname from a series of fearsome "claw" combat spells he's created. This soft-spoken, brilliant strategist never forgets a name or a face and prefers to work with subtle gentleness, avoiding making enemies whenever possible. He is aided by Alatha Sonsyba1,24 a cruel, sneering sensualist who's rather openly working to take his place. For the time being, Ornar is ignoring her schemes. He's concentrating instead on developing a series of new and more powerful magic storm spells. His plans include conquering Hellgate

<sup>24</sup>Alatha Sonsybal is an NE hf W17 (INT 18, CHA 17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Galguth Shund is an LE hm W17, and Cannather Vool of Calimshan is an LE hm W15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>The Overwizard of the East, Ornar of the Claw, is a CE hm W20 (INT 18, WIS 18).



Keep, Silverymoon, Everlund, and Sundabar, in the process creating a northern empire. He plans to manipulate the Uthgardt tribes into doing most of the work and taking the blame before he openly commits the magical might of the mages under his command.

The Overwizard of the South: The Overwizard of the South is Deltagar Zelhund, 25 a handsome, smoothtongued man given to splendid clothing and the company of beautiful ladies, both the human sort and females of the snake-like race known as yuan-ti. His assistants are all yuan-ti, including some who seem to have developed a mastery of magic equal to that of many senior human mages. 26

A firm ally of the current Archmage Arcane, Deltagar dislikes treachery and open hostility of all sorts, preferring to use his magic to manipulate, control, and prevent other actions. He occupies himself with building a vast network of thieves, informers, and court manipulators as far south as Lantan and Tashluta. He hopes that this web of agents will soon fund all of the Brotherhood's activities. Deltagar has plans to exploit the riches of Chult and harness or subvert the best inventions of Lantan.

The Overwizard of the West: The

Overwizard of the West is a taciturn, muscular, young wizard named Eltuth Oyim, once of Tashluta.<sup>27</sup> He's known as "the Wyvernmaster" due to spells he's created that allow him to control any wyverns he encounters, take wyvern shape, and so on.

Eltuth dreams of conquest, and delights in blasting things and people with mighty spells. He simply loves crushing people under the stones of towers he topples with these showy and explosive spells. Masking this exultation behind an expressionless facade, he works with six or so veteran battle mages, notably the hook-nosed, one-eyed Alagar Hawkluster. His plans include conquering Ruathym, Tuern, Evermeet, and the far-off land called Maztica.

# The Cutlass

Tavern/Inn/Festhall

!!! 00

This notorious pirate dive discreetly but dearly rents a few rooms. These are usually patronized by professional escorts and their clients, and by the extremely desperate or the extremely deaf, since the surroundings are usually a bedlam of rowdy, raucous violence from about noon to after dawn!

 $<sup>^{25}\</sup>mbox{The Overwizard}$  of the South, Deltagar Zelhund, is an LE hm W21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Theyuan-ti is a monster detailed in *Volume 1* of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®. Yuan-ti wizards are an old legend of the South, but have rarely been seen in Faerún. It is thought that they are limited to the 9th level of advancement, because four of Deltagar's staff are that powerful and seem incapable of wielding more powerful snells

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>The Overwizard of the West, Eltuth Oyim, is an NE hm W19 (STR 17, DFX 17, INT 18, CHA 16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Alagar Hawkluster is an LE hm W16 (STR 17, INT 18, WIS 17).



#### The Place

The Cutlass has a rough fieldstone street level, a raised entry porch, and clapboard sheathed upper floors. There are balconies overhanging Half Moon Street and extensive cellars. Except for kitchens, a jakes, and various stairs and secret climbing shafts, the entire ground floor is taken up by the tayern. This consists of a common room with a large corner bar. A wine rack and beer kegs crowd behind it, flanking a dumbwaiter large enough for folk to make hasty exits when Luskanite soldiers come in unexpectedly. The roof of the Cutlass is a mix of patched slate and cedar shakes. and is adorned with several trapdoors, swinging laundry poles, and scars where entire gables have been blown or burnt away in spell duels.

# The Prospect

This place is always cheerfully noisy—a sort of brawling "fun house" for pirates. If you want to hurl people into tables or punch them through stair rails to the floor below, this is the place to come and do it. Just watch out for all the others waiting to do it to you.

The fatalities recently grew so numerous that the high captains decreed a "no weapons" policy at the Cutlass. The intention was to drive it out of business, as no one would dare walk through the slums to get to it unarmed. The anonymous but numerous staff (including some

mages)now takes any steel weapons you may have as you enter, keeping them behind the bar. Hatpins, garrotes, and small concealed daggers<sup>29</sup> often get past them, but not much else. If you don't pay your bill at the Cutlass, you don't get your weapons back. In the event of soldiers arriving, the staff try to disarm them too, delaying them long enough for wanted patrons to get behind the bar, snatch up their weapons, and flee down into the cellars.

There's a tunnel that rises up from the cellars to the surface several alleys over, but it's guarded by a stone golem belonging to the Cutlass. The golem is large enough to block entry, which it will do unless a gold piece is put into its hand by each person who wishes to pass. The golem also prevents soldiers from coming into the cellars unannounced. Years ago, some wag dubbed this sentinel "Captain Reaper," and the name has stuck.

Most of the time, the Cutlass is one long, boisterous party with uninhibited female escorts leading the singing, dancing, and other acrobatics.

#### TheProvender

Food in the Cutlass is minimal and on the salty side, designed to make you buy more drinks. It's tasty enough to sample a time or two, though. You can choose between a bowl of spicy stir-fried clams or smoky-flavored mussels wrapped in very salty bacon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Treat as darts for damage and throwing purposes.



#### The Prices

A bowl of fried clams is 3 cp; a bowl of mussels is 4 cp; a tankard of pale lager is 3 cp; a tankard of thick, slightly bitter Luskan Black ale is 5 cp; and a bottle of red or white Fighting Cock wine is 9 sp. The latter is a local brew, quite vile, but laced with spirits to make it raw and strong. It burns readily in any flame.

Rooms are 7 gp per person per night—9 gp if discretion is required (in other words, the staff lies about who's rented rooms if soldiers ask). The company of a lady escort is 14 gp on top of that.<sup>30</sup>

#### Travelers'Lore

The Cutlass is famous up and down the Sword Coast as a dangerous, fun place that sailors and merchants alike like to boast they've often been to. It's overrated, of course, and it's certainly no place to try and get some sleep.

Several colorful characters fence stolen goods, deal in slaves, and put folk into contact with thieves, mercenaries, and killers-for-hire in the Cutlass. They sit in curtained booths along the walls and don't bother each other. They are allowed to keep their weapons for self-defense. Most have wands of paralyzation ready under the table. These characters include "Red" Aruph Thunderfist, Inther Black-

feather, and Jalboun of the Two Blades.<sup>31</sup>

# Seven Sails Inn

Inn

SSS BBBB

The only inn in Luskan, "Safesails" stands on the south side of Setting Sun Street, two blocks east of the local watertower known as the Needle. It's a place of surprising quality.

The Arcane Brotherhood have no less than six agents on the inn staff, including some chambermaids. They keep a careful watch on all guests, and report magic use or the carrying of suspicious wares, weapons, or magical items to their superiors. They have been known to poison or drug guests, and use vials of sleep-inducing gas to make it easy for the Brotherhood to capture whoever it wants.

#### The Place

The inn is a soaring, wooden-crested building studded with windows. It resembles a giant sharkfin. Each window has a window box planted with flowers in summer. These provide a convenient handhold for climbers year-round. The building is built of massive timbers, braced as the struts of a ship are. Suites are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Some of the lady escorts are skilled thieves and fighters. They are forbidden to steal from guests, to avoid trouble. They are expected to help guests escape authorities. They will mock faints, make distracting displays, or literally fight to make a way out. Weapons are hidden behind wall panels, paintings, plants, and so on all over the Cutlass, and the staff knows where they all are. If a lady escort helps a guest to escape, she'll expect a tip of at least 6 gp, the next time she sees the guest.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>See Appendix I for details.



spacious, and several flights of back stairs make discreet exits and arrivals possible for those who know their way around.

#### The Prospect

A skilled, quietly dignified staff makes guests welcome. The furnishings are fine, achieving the effect of a luxuirious, quiet haven from the harshness of the city outside. Warm baths are always ready for your pleasure, and the tap of a bell brings a runner to your side to deliver messages, fetch drinks, and run errands across the city or within the walls of the inn. Meals are customarily served in the guest rooms, rather than in a common dining room. This keeps the



atmosphere private, exclusive, and uncrowded.

#### The Provender

The food served at the Seven Sails is pleasant but undistinguished, with bland seasonings often ruining generous portions. Platters of octopi or squid are available in season. An excellent wine list fails to rescue the fare, but one can eat safely and hugely here and never complain about bad food.

There are two bright notes on the large menu: the traditional Luskanite dish of *brassla* and the salmon cream garnish served with greens.

Brassla is rice with eels, onions, fish, frogs, oysters, and mice. The rice is boiled and then added to a fry of all the other ingredients, which are chopped finely before frying.

The salmon cream is a buttery, cheese-flavored sauce made with bits of crushed, smoked salmon. It is served over fried, steamed, or fresh greens (depending on what type they are).

#### The Prices

For all the luxury, the Seven Sails is surprisingly cheap. Everything can be had for 20 gp per night (no stabling is available). This includes all meals and drinks, laundry and tailoring services, errand running, and the like. Tips are expected atop this for errand running, helping a guest wash, or other care-intensive special duties.



#### Travelers'Lore

The Seven Sails has a famous treasure tale. The riches of the notorious Runner of the Rocks, a dead pirate named Shargul, are said to be hidden somewhere in its walls. The hoard is a huge cache of gems concealed from magical scrying by its own strong spells. It's also guarded by many animated skeletal hands.<sup>32</sup>

There are also several hidden closets out of which dusty human skeletons tumble from time to time, shocking guests who are up and about in the wee hours. More than one human skull has bounced and rolled down a carpeted hall to confront a startled patron coming up the stairs. Finally, a gold dragon was said to have had its lair in the inn, taking human shape by day, and flying by night. Its hoard, too, has never been found.<sup>33</sup>

# Other Places of Interest in Luskan

# Shops

Baliver's House of Horses Stables



The only rental stable in the city is easily found by visitors. Its large, walled paddocks and sheds stand at the south end of the Upstream Span.

The stables are used by all Luskanites except soldiers, caravan company staff, the Brotherhood, and the high captains. Stabling for visitors is 4 gp per mount per night. This comes with excellent care, and the ever-present vigilance of Brotherhood spies. If members of the Arcane Brotherhood think a visitor might lead them to treasure or magic, they may pay a visit to the stables and cast a *tracer* spell on a mount or two, so that they can easily track the visitor after she or he leaves Luskan.

# Alleys

Rooming houses, moneylenders, pleasure houses, restaurants and private sailors' clubs crowd the streets along the seawall. Here can be found informers and thieves-for-hire.

#### The Bloodrun

B

This is the last street before the seawall. It's often patrolled (and always watched) by soldiers. It wraps around the south end of the wall to become the Piers.

# Dragon Beach

J.J.J.J.

The original harbor of Luskan, this haven is crowded with the rotting

<sup>32</sup>These are crawling claws (detailed in MC3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Elminster says this tale is true; the gold dragon did use the inn as a home for a time until it was badly wounded by Brotherhood mage attacks. Its hoard was never here, Elminster adds, and it left behind only a magical staff and a wand of some sort. Elminster doesn't know what types they are or where they're hidden. He does know that strong enchantments built into the inn thwart all magical divination, locating, eavesdropping, and teleportation magics.



hulks of small coastboats, busy cogs and caravels, and the sleeker vessels crewed by seafaring pirates and privateering merchants. It is a place where the person who speaks or steps wrongly can find a cutlass in his vitals in short order. When Luskan is taking ship to war, or fighting off an attack, soldiers keep deadly discipline here, but the rest of the time this area is as lawless a place as a traveler can easily find on the surface of the Realms.

#### Half Moon Street

Two important establishments stand here: the Temple of Red Sails, dedicated to the goddess Umberlee, and the Cutlass, a notorious tavern.

#### The Piers

This is the more dangerous continuation of the Bloodrun. It takes its name from the many piers that jut from it onto Dragon Beach, and then out into the harbor. The patrols don't habitually round the bend to check out the Piers.

Rat Alley

One story says that this alley got its name from a restaurant opened here by two retired shiphands. It was a dining experience called the Fried Rat. The sailors offered rat as the main fare, because they'd developed a taste for it on long voyages.<sup>34</sup>

# Neverwinter

The City of Skilled Hands is a beautiful, relaxed place. It's a walled city of 17,000 folk, mainly humans and half-elves.

Craftsmen love the beauty of Neverwinter, and they enjoy living among other craftsmen in the City of Skilled Hands. They constantly try to outdo each other in striving for everincreasing efficiency and beauty of design.

The city is famous across Faerûn for its water clocks, which set the standard for precision in the Realms. Hence, the phrase "by the clocks of Neverwinter" is used when one is swearing at niggling perfectionism or solemnly swearing by one's own honesty. The city is also famous for its multicolored lamps of blended glass that changes hue across its surface. Such lamps sometimes have tinted, sliding glass shutters of several shades. In some cases, the shutters are enchanted so as to change position by themselves, altering the color of the light.<sup>35</sup> Neverwinter has also given its name to the Neverwinter knife. This is a tiny, jewelled dagger made to be concealed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Again, according to Elminster, the tale is true. The restaurant burned down long ago. Some say this was at the hands of angry wererats, but others say flaming grease spilled in the kitchens.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>The clocks cost at least 150 gp each. They are sought after by sophisticates across the Realms. Most are the size of a merchants' coffer. The lamps sell for 3 to 9 gp each, depending on size, richness of design, and the number of shutters. They also cost much more if they're enchanted, of course.



in a hair comb, belt buckle, or bracelet.

Neverwinter is ruled by Lord Nasher Alagondar, an amiable and balding warrior<sup>36</sup> who keeps his city firmly in the Lords' Alliance. Lord Nasher has laid many intrigues and magical preparations against attacks from Neverwinter's warlike rival town, Luskan. Nasher doesn't allow maps of the city to be made (hence the lack of one in these pages). This is to keep the spies of Luskan busy and add a minor measure of difficulty to any Luskanite invasion plans.

The royal badge of the city is a white swirl—a sideways "M," with points to the right. It connects three white snowflakes; each flake is different, but all are encircled by silver and blue haloes.

Lord Nasher is always accompanied by his bodyguard, the Neverwinter Nine. They have many magical items Nasher accumulated over a very successful decade of adventuring.

Many Harpers dwell in Neverwinter, as do a few skilled dwarven craftspeople of note. Many goodaligned mages also make Neverwinter their home, including the Many-Starred Cloak, a band of wizards who are the real power in the city. They support Lord Nasher's rule with their spells. They also make *blastglobes*<sup>37</sup> for the 400-strong city militia. Females and males serve as equals in this mounted force armed with spears, long swords, longbows, boot daggers, and hand crossbows.

Neverwintans tend to be quiet, mannered, literate, efficient, and hard-working folk. Deadlines and precision are important in all they do. They respect not only the property of others, but whatever interests another person holds important for personal happiness. "Following one's weird" is a Neverwintan saying for odd or reckless behavior. Everyone native to this city understands the need to do such.

All in all, Neverwinter is perhaps the most cosmopolitan city in Faerûn, escaping Waterdeep's slums and grasping competitiveness, and Silverymoon's harsher climate and heavier need for defense against orcs and other evils. Cities in Amn and Calimshan commonly claim to be more civilized, but merchants who trade there all say that Neverwinter truly is civilized, unlike some showier rivals who, as the sage Mellomir once put it, "have achieved decadence without the need for passing through civilization first."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Lord Nasher Alagondar is an NG hm F12 (STR 18/09, CHA 17) ex-adventurer who wears a ring of the ram, a ring of protection +4, and a belt of regeneration (identical in effects to a vampiric ring of regeneration). He is armed with a mace of disruption, a long sword +3, frost brand, and many smaller and less well-known magical items. His bodyguard, the Nine, are all LG hm F5s devoted to Nasher. Each has a magical sword and armor of some sort, and most carry an additional item of battle magic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Blastglobes are bronze-hued glass spheres that are hurled in battle. Treat them as grenade-like missiles. They burst on impact for 2d8 damage. There's no shrapnel or fiery damage, simply a concussive blast.

They can be made to enclose things such as keys, caltrops, weapons, and messages. These will be delivered unharmed to the burst site.

The globes can't enclose stasis fields, and hence can't be used to convey living things. Gases and poisons are rendered ineffective by the magical formation of the globes, so they can't serve as cargo either.



Neverwinter controls much mining trade from dwarves and gnomes that come up from the Underdark by various hidden ways to surface in various warehouses of this city. The city also has a large fishing economy, both from the banks and offshore. The warm waters make this fertile ground for all forms of shellfish and finned fish alike. Neverwinter also does good trade in logging from the Neverwinter Wood. The key to Neverwinter's survival, though, is its importance as a center of craftwork, learning, and magical innovation. Amid all the weird-following tolerance and variety in the city, there is a respect for peacefulness, law, and order. This seems to be necessary security for the artists and craft folk to concentrate on their own designs.

# Landmarks

This city is a delight for the eyes. Everywhere are buildings that would be noteworthy anywhere else for the grace or ingenuity of their design. The meandering streets make fast travel across the city nigh unto impossible, and leave visitors in grave risk of becoming lost whenever they venture out of their lodgings, especially at night. On warm summer nights, street parties are common, and the rest of the time, the lanes are thankfully uncrowded. Street vendors are unheard of in Neverwinter, but many professionals make house calls. They may be summoned by the everpresent street runners (small children making 1 cp per message taken).





The city's nickname—City of Skilled Hands—actually comes from its gardeners, who are skilled enough to keep flowers blooming in windows and spell-sheltered arbors throughout the city even in the coldest winter months. Neverwinter is a city of trees, gardens, winding streets, and beautiful buildings. The Neverwinter River cascades over small falls and is spanned by many small, arched, ornate bridges as it runs through the city. The waters are so warm that the harbor never freezes

Neverwinter is laid out roughly in the shape of an eye. The long axis runs roughly east and west along the Neverwinter River. One end of the city is the harbor, and the other end is the Upland Rise, a wooded hill left as a natural park. To the east is Neverwinter Wood.

The walls of the city are pierced by northwestern, northeastern, south-western and southeastern gates. The militia has small fortress keeps at both of the eastern gates.

The craftsmen of Neverwinter have three emblems to be particularly proud of. The three main bridges in Neverwinter are the Dolphin Bridge, the Winged Wyvern Bridge, and the Sleeping Dragon Bridge. Each is intricately and passionately carved in the likeness of its namesake. The Wyvern is readily recognizable for the spread wings that serve as a perch to

seagulls and other birds in the warmer months, and as a place to dive into the river for bolder youths. All three bridges are assets to the City of Skilled Hands.

The Sleeping Dragon Bridge leads from Castle Never to the Hall of Justice, a powerful temple of Tyr. Reverend Judge Oleff Uskar presides over Lord Nasher's civil court here. This is low justice; nobles, those accused of murder or other serious crimes, and noncitizens can all apply to the high justice of the lord himself. Uskar is assisted by Prior Hlam, who takes charge of training the devout in what justice is and how to mete it out or defend it. This includes drills in disciplined weapons training.<sup>38</sup>

Less than a day's ride southeast of the city is Helm's Hold, a fortified monastery dedicated to the God of Guardians. It was founded less than two decades ago by Dumal Erard, <sup>39</sup> a retired member of the Company of Crazed Venturers of Waterdeep. It has grown to a watchful community of over 700 faithful. The people here grow their own crops, herd their own cattle, dig deep wells for their own water, and patrol the area with vigilance. They will give shelter to any travelers beset or weakened by brigands or monsters.

One of the most impressive buildings in Neverwinter is located at one end of the Dolphin Bridge. It's the arch-roofed House of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Oleff is an LG hm P10 of Tyr; Hlam is an LG hm PS of Tyr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Dumal is an LN hm P12 of Helm and a noted war leader. He fortified a single farm known as Helm's Stead to create Helm's Hold.



Knowledge, the tall, many-windowed temple to Oghma. Here, Chief Priest Watger Brighthair and Elder Reader Salyndra Shaern<sup>40</sup> lead worship to Oghma in the form of free teaching sessions to all who would learn.

The Neverwinter River bends sharply south and then north again in a smooth curve just before it empties into the Sea of Swords in the Bay of Mists, Neverwinter's natural harbor. In this bend sits Castle Never, the old, proud keep of the Lord Never, the home and court of the ruling lord of the city. Somewhere in its depths is said to be the tomb of Lord Halueth Never, an elven warrior who battled Illusk in olden days.

Lord Never is laid to rest, local tavern tales swear, on a huge slab of stone encircled by a ring of naked swords laid with their points radiating outward. These magical blades do not rust and animate to attack all intruders if the precise instructions graven in cryptic verses on the flagstones are not followed.<sup>41</sup>

From the circular walk around Castle Never, the three ornate bridges radiate out across the river, reaching toward buildings on the south bank.

At the spot where the Neverwinter River flows into the city stands the Cloaktower. This is the meeting place and citadel of the Many-Starred Cloak. 42 Among the treasures known to reside within this warded and trapped seat of power is a wondrous magical device found in a Netherese ruin: *Halavar's Universal Pantograph*. 43 It reputedly can make two coins from one, or two swords where there was only one before!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>Watger Brighthair is an LN hm P9 of Oghma (INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 17). Salyndra Shaern is an NG hef P14 of both Oghma and Corellon Larethian. Salyndra was installed to guide the younger Watger, to learn of the wisdom of humans for the elves, and to foster harmony between humans and elves in the city, a task which she excels at. She is a gray-haired, dry-voiced, cynical and petite old lady whose hair is always long and unkempt and who dresses in simple dark robes. Her biting advice often conceals a heart of gold. A lost or beset traveler will find her a quick and true friend. Adventurers are always returning to tell her of their successes and to give gifts to the temple in repayment for the aid she gave them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>There are 12 blades, all of different magical sorts of the DM's devising or from those detailed in the *DUNGEON MASTER*<sup>TM</sup> *Guide*. The instructions to avoid activating them are left up to the DM, but they animate to become AC -1, MV Fl 22 (A), 2 attacks per round at THACO 6 each. They are defeated when dealt 66 hp of damage each. A blade so damaged is not physically harmed; rather, the magic that animated it is riven, letting it fall motionless. It may then be freely used by anyone who takes it up.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>This band of wizards is led by Eltoora Sarptyl (CG hf W16). It includes at least 15 wizards of 12th or higher level, some of whom are secretly Harpers. Their strength is the only thing that keeps the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan from sweeping down with spells to conquer or enslave Neverwinter. On several occasions, members of the Cloak have woven spells together that approach the lost 10th-level spells of Myth Drannor in power-sinking an island, for example!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>This complex, room-sized item can magically duplicate metal items the size of a large throne or smaller. It can copy swords, coins, and the like, but no incorporated gems or wood inlays. Neither can it copy anything that was once living and became magically transformed into metal. It does make exact duplicates that even the most clever sage cannot tell from the original, even with both to examine. However, it cannot transfer or duplicate magical dweomers, so a magical long sword can be copied 40 times, but only the original will have any magical powers.

The means by which the *Pantograph* was enchanted have been forgotten and even what parts of it enact what effects is not known. Attempts to dismantle it or even move it are highly likely to result in its ceasing to function forever. The Cloak members are very careful to duplicate only a few things on occasions of great necessity. They have no idea if the *Pantograph*'s magic is limited and could be depleted.



# The Fallen Tower

Tavern



This is the most popular tavern in town. It's an attraction all visitors are inevitably urged to visit by Neverwintans. You'll find it's a rather average drinking place. It's dimly lit, like most taverns, and it has the low, beamed ceiling that all taverns seem to share. The furniture is rough and ready, the tavernmaster is jovial, and the serving wenches are buxom. In short, it's like a hundred other roadside tankard tilts. Its claim to fame and sole point of interest is the magical images created by the incident that gives the place its name.

#### The Place

This fieldstone tavern looks like the broken base of a circular tower, which is exactly what it is. The stones of the fallen upper section have been rebuilt into a single story addition to the tower. The tower's wine cellars and staff rooms are located in the circular section, and the taproom is in the newer part, with the jakes at the far end.

# The Prospect

The tower was once the home of a noted wizard, Llomnauvel "Firehands" Oloadhin. He was a thin, balding, rather sour man who became obsessed with the mastery of magic. He was determined to rule the city

that was his home when his magic was mighty enough.

Unfortunately, he came to the attention of the Arcane Brotherhood, which resolved to take his magical items and spells for its own. The Brotherhood's members attacked him in his tower one night several decades ago. Spells raged like glittering starfalls through the night air, and Llomnauvel proved a tough opponent. Paranoid about rivals, he'd prepared for just such an attack with a network of spells waiting on spell triggers. Many of them were specifically intended to trap and rend hostile wizards, and they worked verv well.

Over a dozen of the Brotherhood were slain, mind-blasted, or transformed into helpless forms of marine life and hurled out to sea as the evening passed. This angered Glagorn, the Overwizard in charge of the attack. Glagorn knew the harsh criticism, and, probably, assassination attempts he'd face if he failed. So, the Overlord resolved to take Llomnauvel alive. He planned to torture Llomnauvel and make him testify as to just what had occurred. Glagorn hoped this would clear the attackers of bungling the job. He also hoped to compel the outnumbered wizard to tell his attackers just where the traps and magical treasures were.

He'd not reckoned with Llomnauvel's state of mind. Brought to bay in his spell chamber, wands exhausted and spells gone, the wizard unleashed a final spell that hurled down the tower and burned away the





lives of all within it, including the Overwizard, the surviving Brother-hood mages, and Llomnauvel himself. All enchanted items in the tower were drained to power this shattering magic. The spell has left behind a side effect: clear and solid-seeming phantom images of the mages as they were hurled down from the tower.

Late every night, at the precise time of the explosion that destroyed the tower, one can see the soundless phantoms of two terrified Brotherhood mages, limbs blazing, falling down like rag dolls. The tavern takes advantage of this by railing off the area where they appear through the ceiling and plunge on to vanish through the floor. These first two are followed by the astonished, struggling figure of the Overwizard, whose limbs are turning to eels that rend the rest of him and boring into his silently shrieking mouth just as he vanishes through the floor.

A little later, the figure of Llomnauvel follows. He descends upright, his lower limbs skeletal as flesh and robes alike vanish in a spiral of lightnings that are burning up and around his body. All that is left as he vanishes through the floor is his terrible, triumphant smile.

The show of silent images is greeted each night by a respectful hush and a crowding forward to look. The tavernmaster usually strikes a bell over the bar to warn of the imminent manifestation, which has been repeated now, despite *dispel magic* attempts, for over 30 years.



#### The Provender

The tavern serves only turtle soup, brown bread (with garlic butter, if you wish), and spicy sausages. Everything is salty, to make you order more drink, and there's a full selection of ales, lagers, sherries, brandies, wines, and exotic drinks such as zzar and elverquisst.

#### The Prices

The meals, regardless of what is ordered, are 4 cp per serving. Drinks are by the tankard or tallglass, as follows: ale is 2 cp; stout 3 cp; mead 3 cp; zzar 7 cp; all sherries and brandies are 10 cp; fruit liqueurs are 5 cp; whiskey is 3 sp; firewine 2 gp; and elverquisst 6 gp. Viewing the images is free.

#### Travelers'Lore

Despite rumors to the contrary, not a spell scroll or magical toothpick remains of Llomnauvel's magic. There are deep cellars beneath the old tower, but no one knows just how deep they are. The cellars predate the tower, and may be part of the Underdark or a disused, isolated dwarven stronghold. The staff lets adventurers enter the cellars for 4 gp per person. Some do not return.

Whispers in the taproom say that Llomnauvel was breeding monsters and storing them in *stasis bubbles* in his cellars. He may have had a whole army of guardians. They're said to include mimics, bulettes, a gibbering mouther, bonebats, and others. He supposedly, the bubbles are now failing due to age or disturbance, releasing the monsters to roam. No one who has returned from the cellars has mentioned seeing any treasure.

Some 12 winters ago, a wizard suspected of being a Zhentarim mageling came to the tavern to try to find some of Llomnauvel's magic. The wizard made the mistake of using a killing spell that created a flying knife against a tavern patron, who revealed himself to be a visiting archmage. The more experienced wizard turned the attacking blade into two dozen blades, and hurled them at his attacker, shredding the man. The suspected Zhent had brought two small trunks with him, and they teleported away upon his death. No one knows where they went or what



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>The first two monsters listed appear in MC2 and the last two are in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set.



was in them. Local rumor has always indicated that they relocated somewhere nearby, perhaps into a hidden chamber beneath the ruined tower, into the known cellars, or into the cesspit beneath the jakes. Patrons who want to look aren't welcome to do so unless they pay their 4 gp.

# The Moonstone Mask

Inn/Restaurant/Festhall



Famous among sailors up and down the Sword Coast, this friendly establishment is named for the glowing, moonstone-trimmed masks worn by all of its staff. Most of the staff are beautiful females dressed in sheer black gowns. A quiet inn of comfortable quality, it has an uppermost fest-hall floor and a ground floor entirely taken up by kitchens and a large dining room. The curving stairs to the upper floors rise through the dining room, where many citizens of Neverwinter, as well as inn guests, often come to dine.

#### The Place

The dining room is lit by a huge hearth, and by lanterns hanging from the sides of the grand staircase. The three floors above are the luxurious rooms, soundproofed with carefully cast spells and furnished with fur rugs. These three are topped by a festhall floor of luxurious suites beneath an attic with a steeply sloped roof. There is also a seldom-used rooftop landing platform for winged steeds. It is rumored that skyships from Halruaa moor here from time to time.

#### The Prospect

The women of the Mask are famed as good friends, worthy gaming opponents, and wise conversationalists. Many important personages of Amn, Baldur's Gate, Waterdeep, and the North come to Neverwinter regularly to discuss their plans and business with their favorite "lady in a mask." The ladies all use "house names" when on duty, and they never remove their moonstone-adorned half-masks. One of the anonymous ladies is actually the owner of the place and a powerful mage in the Many-Starred Cloak. 45

She set out to build the sort of place she would like to stay in, and she's fully aware of the importance her staff plays as friends and confidants of the important folk of this corner of Faerûn. All of her staff wear amulets that protect them from magical mind-reading or control. The amulets also allow them to send messages to her by silent thought. She has 12 battle horrors in the attic. They can fly down the chimney to quickly reach any disturbance. Two of them wield wands of paralyzation.

As a result of her care in selecting and training her ladies and the allmale kitchen staff, a visit to the Mask

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>She is Ophala Cheldarstorn and is detailed in Appendix I.





is a relaxed, enjoyable treat, like coming home to a warm group of friends you didn't know you had.

#### The Provender

The Mask serves meat dishes done to order and also makes various hot pies (boar and veal, bacon and kidney, seafood, or chicken liver). Daintyfish skewers are made using the little baitfish called silverflashes. There are 20 to a skewer, and they are dipped in herbed butter and sizzled over a flame until they're crunchy. Musseland-basil soup enlivens the expected menu of chowders, turtle soup, and octopus broth.

As an appetizer, the Mask offers mushrooms doused in an herb-andgarlic sauce, and scallions and fennel soaked in a parsley-and-mint chicken broth. For a sweet dish, try the blackberry-and-apple pie, topped with cream and sliced almonds, or, for the road, try palm-sized gooseberry and almond tarts. On rare nights, when strawberries are in season and chocolate has come in from Calimshan, try strawberries in a chilled chocolate coating—an unforgettable delight!

#### The Prices

Prices at the Mask are simple: 16 gp per night for a room, stabling, and as much food and drink as desired. It's 45 gp more for a lady's company for an evening. Walk-in diners pay the



same escort prices and 10 gp for all they can eat, including a small flask of house wine. A good wine costs 6 gp per bottle. Firewine is 9 gp, and elverquisst is 20 gp per bottle. Hard cider or ale is 4 cp per tankard for nonguests. The Mask has a particularly nice selection of brews.

#### Travelers'Lore

There are tales around the Mask of all sorts of famous folk being caught in embarrassing situations while visiting the ladies (would you believe Elminster was found stuck head downward in a chimney?). 46 The only tale of interest to the more adventurous guest is that of the secret suites where visitors can stay unseen, coming and going by way of their own secret entrances. Also, rumor says that the deepest cellar of the Mask is connected to dwarven-held areas of the Underdark, and it holds a *lot* of smoke powder!

The Mask is supposedly haunted, but the ghost is a friendly, unseen spirit who closes doors, tucks guests in, plants tingling kisses on their cheeks if they seem upset or lonely, hangs up discarded clothing, and takes away forgotten plates and glasses. It has been known to rouse or warn staff to prevent thefts and attempted killings of guests. In life, the spirit was Chanthra, a very acrobatic lady of the Mask who spoke seldomly and died of a fever.

The moonstone masks worn by all staff members (outside the kitchens) bear a minor enchantment. They allow those who look through them to see clearly in full darkness, or, if they wish, with infravision. It's said that the lady owner of the Mask owns the original mask that she patterned the others on-and that it's an item of long-ago Netheril, with many powers including fly, teleport without error, know alignment, and read languages. There's also a rumor that panels all over the Mask open when the right word is whispered. They reveal magical wands ready to fire at troublemaking intruders.47

The cellars of the Mask also conceal a *gate*. It's at the back of a cloak closet, some say. Others insist it's at the top of a loft ladder leading to a ledge where bedding is stored. Who knows? There may be two gates, and both tales true, but the destination(s) reached by this magic still remains a mystery.

# The Shining Serpent lun

Inn

**!!!!** BBB

This inn is the largest and most popular guesthouse in Neverwinter. It's about three times as large as most inns. This, along with its sculpted silver serpent signpost, makes it stand out, so that visitors to the city can easily find it.

 $<sup>^{46}</sup>$ Elminster: "No, I would not believe that. I'd never be fool enough to get into a chimney; it was a laundry chute"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Both these rumors, says the Old Mage, are true.





#### The Place

This outside-framed mud-brick building rises four stories above the street, with several flights of wooden stairs running down the back. The treads are usually slick from the mists, so keep hold of the rail, especially at night. If your room is lucky enough to be close to one of the landings, you'll get a nice view of the harbor, some sun, and a free snack from the tomato plants and herbs grown at the landing.

# The Prospect

Inside, the visitor will find a pricey, but pleasant and clean, inn. Service is politely distant and seldom seen. Expect to have to ask for bathwater and other amenities. The inn does provide warm, fluffy robes for guests to wander about in. The robes are embroidered with the silver serpent to discourage theft, though I must admit I've seen such robes worn in salons in Amn and by nobles at parties in Waterdeep. The dining room is rather bare and unspectacular. Suites are pleasant, but also rather bare, with sea-green carpets everywhere. A silver snake embroidered on a hall-way carpet indicates that the nearest door is a jakes.

#### The Provender

Food in the Serpent is good, but fairly bland. It's standard fare, with two



notes of interest: They bake their own small, round loaves of bread, whose delightful aroma fills the place each morning, and they make eel pie, which tastes much better than it sounds.

#### The Prices

Twelve gold pieces a night per person buys a traveler a place to sleep, including dinner and stabling. All drinks and any other meals are extra. The food costs a flat 5 gp per meal. Drink is 6 gp for a good bottle of wine, rising to 10 gp for firewine or zzar, the best potables in the house. The Serpent serves only a rather watery lager, known among sailors as "old serpent spit." This is 4 sp per tankard.

#### Travelers'Lore

The Serpent seems to be a clean, safe place to stay, despite persistent rumors that it's the place where most of the smuggling into and out of Neverwinter is arranged. One room of the Serpent is said to be haunted by a hoarse, whispering voice that talks of spells and wizardly deeds of long ago.

# Other Places of Interest in Neverwinter

There wouldn't be space enough in a guidebook several times the size of this one to mention all the beautiful homes, shops, and gardens that meet the eye of the visitor to Neverwinter. I

urge you to go and see for yourselves. Here I can only touch on the most useful features to the traveler.

#### Shops

# Dannar's Mechanical Marvels Specialty Shop



This is a shop selling gnomish, Lantanna, and dwarven clockwork wonders. These include self-striking, wind-up, pushbutton flint boxes and electrum jewelry boxes inlaid with pearl, sporting animated adornments such as tiny clockwork dragons that chase their tails around a central, pop-up vanity mirror. The things on sale here awe most visitors, and so do the prices.

#### Jaesor's Fineware Porcelain Works

Next to Dannar's is the shop where Jaesor Ryndyl and his family craft and sell finely painted plates. 48 Many local families and personalities like to have their family arms or personal likenesses painted on their dinnerware. Jaesor will custom-paint one plate for 10 gp. A matched set of 20 is 45 gp.

# Manycoins Moneylending Moneychanger



This trade store boasts as large a variety of currency as any shop in Water-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>The plates sold here are what we call china.



deep, and changes money from coinage to coinage for small fees. It is watched over by helmed horrors, as well as the professional thieves who own and run the shop.

# Maskado's Maps & Legends Bookshop

An entire street of bookshops, scribes, and bookbinders winds away southeast from the House of Knowledge. Of these dusty, fascinating places, adventurers and travelers are most likely to be interested in Maskado's, a shop specializing in maps, records, hints, and tales of the North concerned with exploration, treasure, trails, and hidden ways.<sup>49</sup>

# The Mute Lute Luthier

Across the road from Jaesor's shop stands the octagonal, cedar-shingled home of the half-elven lutemaker Rebeth Laereeryn. The house is built around an old oak tree. Rebeth lives with the tree's dryad, crafting lutes prized around the Realms. They're custom-made for 3,000 gp each or sold "off the rack" for 900 gp and up. His shop takes its name from a spell that Rebeth can invoke to silence all sound within its walls.

# Shining Knight Arms & Armor Armorer

Down the street from the Hall of Knowledge and to the southwest stands an interesting shop. Here the best armor can be custom-ordered. It will be produced speedily, thanks to good dwarven contacts and a mage owner who has mastered some spells to reshape metal.

#### Restaurant

#### The Board Laid Bare

8 8

This restaurant just inside the city's northeast gate offers dining with no frills but very low prices. It serves no beer, wine, or spirits, but fills guests full of fresh fish cooked in cream sauces; roast boar, hare, or venison; greens or fried potatoes in a mustard sauce; or onions fried in a tomato sauce. Surprising side dishes, but very good fare.

#### Tavenns

Neverwinter has more wine houses than taverns. These are small, private clubs where a few tables of regulars gather most evenings for conversation, gaming, and light drinking and dining. a typical evening at a wine house is paid for in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>A typical scrap of inscription or crude map sold by Maskado costs 100 gp. A proper treasure map or a detailed view of a known area fetches twice that. Maskado is a tall, mysterious, blue-skinned individual who may or may not be a member of that mysterious race known as the arcane (detailed in the SPELLJAMMER® AD&D® Adventures in Space boxed set). His background, motives, and sources are unknown. He buys maps and information from adventurers for much less than he sells such things for.



advance and costs 12 gp, everything included. If musicians, entertainers, or rare vintages are involved, the price can easily double.

# PORT LLAST

This village of 700 folk is found on the High Road between Luskan and Neverwinter. Port Llast is an ally of Neverwinter. Fifty men-at-arms from the City of Skilled Hands, bolstered by 30 of the Lord's Alliance troops, aid the 50-person local militia in guarding the town from brigand raids and the harassment of Luskan. The Lords' Alliance troops are mainly from Elturel and Baldur's Gate, so that a Luskan attack would risk war with two economically powerful cities.

Port Llast is a city of skilled stonecutters and has a fine harbor. The stonecutters work at quarries on the coastal headlands just south of the village. Other than harborage or stonecutting, there is little else to recommend it to the traveler today, for it is a tense, suspicious place, always expecting treachery or attack from Luskan. The city is is ruled by First Captain Haeromos Dothwintyl, a retired stonemason. 50

At Port Llast, a beach and inlet empty into a small bay sheltered by a high, rocky spit. The port is overlooked by cliffs on which boulder-hurling siege engines have been placed. The harbor is home to a 12-boat fishing fleet, but two of the ships are in very poor repair. Luskan desires the magnificent harbor as a more southerly base for its warships.

Of old, when Luskan (then called Illusk) was held by orcs and duergar, Port Llast was a thriving city. It was the last port in human hands as one sailed north (hence the name). Back then, it was home to 14,000 miners and explorers eager to find gold, gems, and all the rest of the fabled mineral wealth of the North. Orc raids smashed the city. The shattered remnants of the city's walls still ring it, though much stone has been used to repair local homes or has been taken away and sold. Port Llast's outer reaches are overgrown by scrub forest or are used as gardens or graveyards.

# Places of Interest in Port Llast

Shops

The Cracked Anvil Blacksmith

5 5 5 5

Haljal Throndor is the smith who runs this forge. He is quite skilled at all manner of ironmongery. The establishment is easily found by the cracked anvil displayed in front of it.

 $<sup>^{50}</sup>$ Haeromos is an LN hm F3 (STR 17, wis 17). He wields a long sword +3 that is enspelled so as to send a message to Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun when grasped and ordered. The First Captain will use it only to warn of an attack on the village.



# Whaelgund's Wheelrace Wagonworks



Port Llast is home to a competent wagonworks and repair shop run by the stout, jolly Whaelgund, who never stops talking, laughing, or cracking jokes. His attempts to sing are simply ghastly.

#### Taverns

#### The Jack and Saber

::: DDD

The Jack is an average tavern in all respects, from its smoke-filled air to

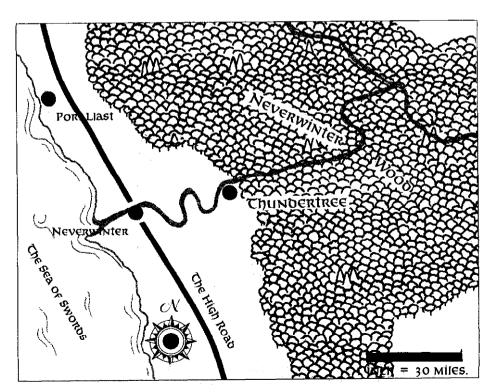
its low-beamed, dark taproom, to its furniture that seen better days, to its patrons who have also seen better days. You can afford to miss this one.

#### INNS

#### **TheAllianceArms**



There is a single inn in Port Llast. It's well built, but rather dour, a no-nonsense place to sleep. It's ever-present mop-and-broom maids are a surprisingly rich source of local information (after a drink or two).









# The Frozenfar



olk in Waterdeep use the term Frozenfar to describe the places that are so far north that people can freeze solid

as they walk. They suggest the frigid regions are where only the most crazed humans and dwarves venture in search of iron, gems, gold, and other metals the like of which are not to be found in more hospitable lands.

The Frozenfar starts at Mirabar, and extends west as far as the end of the mainland ice. It reaches east as far as the easternmost reaches of the Valley of Khedrun (sometimes rendered Khedron). Khedrun—pronounced *Ked-ROON*— was a famous dwarven prospector who discovered the greatest gem lodes ever known.

No human knows how far north the land goes, but the glaciers of the Endless Ice Sea make it inhospitable to humans not far north from the Spine of the World. Many tales tell of ice-locked valleys and wild plateaus ringed by a rampart of peaks where strange beasts dwell, along with eccentric mages who fled from Netheril long ago. The stories contend that they survive by means of awesome magic. Some of these tales may even be true.<sup>1</sup>

Only fools and adventurers go to this region for pleasure. Everyone else is there because they were born there or because they've come seeking the buried wealth of Faerûn.

The isolated communities of Fireshear and Ironmaster are covered in the section of this guidebook called "Other Places of Note in the North" because it's highly unlikely that a traveler will ever wander thence on a whim. Such a trip must be deliberately planned and arranged.

Barbarians are numerous in these chill wilderlands. Their raids make the Ice Lakes region and the Black Raven River valley perilous places indeed. Though folk used to hunt bear and elk in these lands, today they'd best go in hunting parties of 30 or more or they can expect to find a swift death.

The lands north of the Mirar and the numerous Mines of Mirabar to the east aren't covered in this guidebook. These areas tend to be heavily guarded against frequent orc troll, bugbear, and brigand raids. If you go, you'd best have an invitation from someone you trust with your life, because that's just what you'll be risking.

The overland route linking the Icewind Dale to the southerly Realms runs through a pass in the Spine of the World. It's a pass occupied by the village of Hundelstone. This area is also covered in the "Other Places" chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>"Almost all of them are, as it happens," Elminster said dryly. "I don't recommend any of ye go looking to see for thyselves, but then, the Realms have never known a shortage of fools...."



If you'd like to learn more about the Ten Towns in Icewind Dale, or the splendors of Mirabar, read on. A warning to the traveler: The tales of winter cold aren't wild. Go to the Frozenfar only if you have business there. Roads are unknown north of Mirabar, trails are fewer still, and maps and safe havens are rare indeed.

Those hunters swayed by the racks of antlers displayed on tavern walls in Waterdeep and points south—the ones as wide as three people lying down—should take my advice. Though orcs are fewer here, and transport out is always closer than in the Interior, remember that dead is dead wherever you are. Go armed

eral good guiding companies for hunters, and some guides can also be found in Xantharl's Keep and the Ten Towns. Luskanites are discouraged from offering their services in such ways to outlanders.

The lakes of Icewind Dale are justly famous for their fishing, but be warned. Locals tend to think of the lakes as their own, not a pond for southerners to wander up to and pull their living out of.

# IcewindDale (The Ten Towns)

The land north of the Spine of the World that has not yet been covered by the Reghed Glacier is known as the Icewind Dale.





The origin of the name is obvious: This region is frequently lashed by howling storms that can flatten buildings and scour shrubs from rock crests. Anything that can't lie down will be smashed or frozen by the winds, and anything that can lie down will be buried by the driven snow.

This wild, barren, barbarianinfested region is visited by white dragons, crag cats, and occasionally even glacier remorhaz. There is no sane reason for civilized folk to come here.

The Ten Towns cluster about three lakes: Maer Dualdon, Lac Dinneshere, and Redwaters. These are the only known homes of the knucklehead trout, fish whose fist-sized heads and spiny body bones are akin to fine ivory in hue and appearance. Even in summer, the lake waters are icy enough to kill anyone in the space of a few breaths. Greed brings the roughest rogues to this frozen landit is not a safe place for the idle traveler. The only real exceptions are the longrunners, folk who roam for food and bring firewood from the distant northern flanks of the Spine of the World.

Scrimshanders, the skilled carvers of knucklehead scrimshaw, are important and respected craftsmen here, but everyone else is tolerated only as long they give no trouble and do honest business. In winter, troublemakers are usually slugged on the head, tossed outside, and drenched with the contents of the nearest chamberpot. They'll be dead of the cold before they regain their senses.

Most important of the Ten Towns is the central, walled, trading town of Bryn Shander. It is here that most travelers will end up, unless they really want to join the fishing trade. From Bryn Shander, a gravel trail known as the Eastway leads east to Lac Dinneshere, and to the community of Easthaven at its southern end.

Caer-Dineval and Caer-Konig stand on the western shore of Lac Dinneshere. Despite their names, no castles stand here—they were once log fortresses.

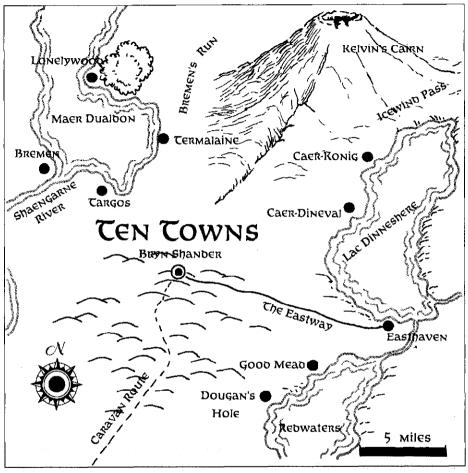
South of Lac Dinneshere is Redwaters, the smallest of the three lakes. The lake was named for a bloody battle where the towns of Good Mead and Dougan's Hole stand.

The tundra between Lac Dinneshere and Maer Dualdon is broken by a thousand-foot-high peak called Kelvin's Cairn. According to barbarian legends, the mountain is named for the frost giant hero Kelvin Duarol, who was slain here by the god Tempus. Tempus pulled rocks from the plain in a long ditch and piled them atop his fallen foe to mark his victory and to warn others of the fate of those who court the war god's wrath.

From its southernmost reaches, a cleft or valley that used to be inhabited by dwarves runs south and west to the hills where Bryn Shander stands.

West and north of this is the largest of the three lakes, Maer Dualdon. Four towns stand on its shores: Bremen, at the outflow of the river that drains the lake into the Shaengarne, and thence to the sea at Ironmaster:





Targos, the only town other than Bryn Shander to be walled; Termalaine, the most beautiful of the settlements, sprawling with tree plantings around the widely scattered houses that are placed behind rubble walls to protect them against the winds; and Lonelywood, the northernmost settlement, whose buildings nestle into the trees of an isolated wood along the lakeshore.

The visitor will find life harsh here, with the 8,000 or so folk of Icewind

Dale suspicious of all outsiders. Most can remember bloody battles against the barbarians and against the tyrant of Icewind Dale, Akar Kessell. They think of visitors as trouble. Many are fugitives from justice in warmer lands, and all have had to be tough—or die.

The speaker (the title of the nominal leader of the town) for Bryn Shander dwells in the largest building of the Ten Towns. Despite its pillared porch, it's no larger than a small inn of the rest of the North.



The highlights of a typical day include a trapper bringing a dozen hares into town to sell, or the town's boats bringing back a good knucklehead catch for eating and scrimshaw. The highlight of a summer month might be an outlander bringing foodsfrom warmer lands for those with coin enough to buy them. Snowberries, rock moss, juniper tips, cold clams, weasels, hares, and the occasional bear or elk are standard fare here, along with the fish that come out of the lake.

Rumors persist of white dragon lairs in the glaciers nearby that are crowded with treasure. Some, the whispers go, even feature abandoned heaps of frozen gems as tall as a house. The treasure descriptions grow even wilder when people speak of the dwarven delves under Kelvin's Cairn and the Spine of the World. Sages of the North and elders of Icewind Dale have both reminded me of the truths that have often been revealed behind such stories. warning me not to dismiss them. It is true that some adventurers come back from Icewind Dale rich beyond their wildest dreams. Some of them even live long enough to enjoy it.

# Places of Interest in Icewind Dale

#### lnns

Except for those in Bryn Shander, all the "inns" in the towns of Icewind Dale are places that the visitor will remember for a long time: They rent straw in the stables for visitors to sleep in, and charge as much as 10 gp for a rough meal in the inns' taverns (in fact, in most places the inn and the tavern are one and the same—most inn/taverns are closer to a rooming house than anything else). Large bands can sometimes rent a warehouse, but they'll find nothing to warm it with unless they've brought their own wood. Most Icewind Dale warehouses are sunk down into the ground to avoid the worst of the wind, and are really only sod-roofed cellars.

Bloodril's Snug Haven
Faelfaril's Inn
Geldenstag's Rest
The Hooked Knucklehead
The Northlook

All \$ \$ \$ \$

All of these inns are in Bryn Shander. They are the oldest and least suitable houses in the settlement. They were built by folk who hadn't yet felt a true northern winter. They stand tall and proud against the icy winds that lash through them by way of a hundred small chinks, leaving guests shivering.

# Minaban

The greatest mining center of the northern Sword Coast has sloped walls as thick through at the base as many city blocks in Waterdeep. Defenders can fire arrows down the walls, or, in winter, pour water down them to make ice slides. The land around the city is littered with mine heads, open quarries, and heaps of slag and waste



rock. The city itself stands on a knoll on the north bank of the Mirar. It's linked by good roads to its major mines in the Spine of the World.

The mines of Mirabar yield up vast quantities of almost all known metals and gemstones, so they are guarded against orc and monster raids by a standing army, the Axe of Mirabar. At 1,000 strong, the Axe is a force of grim, experienced warriors who fight with crossbows, lances, and hammers, riding mountain ponies in summer and rothé in winter. Merchant houses in the city keep another 500 trained soldiers under arms.

Mirabar is the richest city north of Waterdeep, bar none. It sends bars of metal, fine gems, and metalwork of the



compound at Luskan. Thence, these exports travel by ship down the Sword Coast or over land via the Long Road.

The city also ships slabs of quarried stone to anyone willing to pay the huge costs of magically floating them to Luskan, from whence they are shipped south. Many palaces in Amn and grand houses in Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate incorporate Mirabar stone. Mirabar's masons can supply precisely cut blocks of the particular stones, grades, and hues desired, something local quarries often can't do.

Much of this stone comes from the mines west of the city or south across the Mirar. Worthless stone is crushed and used to repair and widen the gravel wagon roads. Crews work continuously at this, except in the worst winter weather.

Mirabar is a city of grim folk, hard work, long hours, hard drinking, and exhausted slumber. There's little rowdiness and almost no crime. Visitors are watched to make sure they're not thinking of creating either, or spying for Luskan, the Zhentarim, Hellgate Keep, the grasping mages of Thay, or anyone else. Thieves, be warned! The city employs professional thief-watchers to tail you continuously, and they're very good at the task.

In the past, Mirabarran merchant houses carried rivalries to the point of open fighting in the streets and mines, and bitter trials were held here frequently. With the help of the Harpers, several rivalries were revealed to be the work of Luskanites, Zhentarim, and even agents from Hellgate Keep, skillfully manip-



ulating the Mirabarrans from behind the scenes. Since those revelations, the rivalries have turned to a common front against the outside world. The miners of Mirabar are now on alert for plots, attempts to sway or mislead them, and attacks or surveillance by their rivals. They pay special attention to Luskan, but they also watch the barbarians, subterranean drow, and duergar looking for a way to invade the city.

Mirabar's trading decisions have a long and far reach across Faerûn. Many a would-be conqueror has been thwarted by the disapproving miners of Mirabar, as Mirabar's enemies often abruptly have difficulty acquiring metal and weapons save by force.

Some 19,000 humans and more than 4,000 dwarves dwell together in relative harmony in Mirabar, working the earth shoulder to shoulder. Rivalries over forge skill are common, but all regard fellow citizens as friends and the rest of the world as unfriendly (or even as foes). Treachery would be unthinkable to a dwarf of Mirabar, and it is hard to tempt even the poorest human in the city.

The folk of Mirabar are ruled by a marchion, but true power in the city is held by the elected Council of Sparkling Stones. This council meets each fall to plan out the amount of metal and stone to be hauled out in the year ahead, and to whom those assets will be sold. The

council keeps Mirabar in the Lords' Alliance, viewing it as a vital lifeline against overwhelming orc horde attacks and Luskanite aggression.

The marchion of Mirabar is Elastul Raurym, who is always accompanied by his "Hammers," four henchmen named Djassar, Hulmm, Kriiador, and Turvon. When he rides out of the city, he goes accompanied by 64 warriors who wear platinum-coated full plate armor.<sup>2</sup> The marchion also brings along two of his Hammers, leaving the other two behind in the city to act as war captains. Fortunately, the marchion only leaves the city once a year.

After the council meets in the fall, the marchion rides south, carrying the word of the Council. He also negotiates trade agreements with rulers who have need of Mirabar's metal, and can trade luxuries Mirabar lacks to get it.

The Council of Sparkling Stones is an elected assembly of 42 folk. The marchion is their chief justice and mouthpiece. Ten of the present councilors are dwarves (two females and eight males) and the rest are human (14 women and 18 men). Prominent Councilors include Agrathan Hardhammer, a dwarven priest of Dumathoin; Dunstun Forgebar, a dwarven priest of Vergadain; Shadrar Thundersar, a warrior; Heldorn "Goldsun" Thaerntyl, an adventurer; and Elyth Talboskh, Pheln Aldtorth, and Maern Hammaver, all merchants.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elastul Raurym is an LN hm F14. He's a fat, lusty, red-bearded man who loves pleasure and money. His Hammers are all LN hm F6s. They are veteran generals, unshakeably loyal to Elastul and to Mirabar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The named councilors are: Agrathan Hardhammer, LN dm P12 of Dumathoin; Dunstun Forgebar, CN dm P10 of Vergadain; Shadrar Thundersar, LN hm F14; Heldorn "Goldsun" Thaerntyl, NG hm F9 ("dual" class; formerly both a W8 and a T3; his nickname comes from his long, curly, blond hair and the two *sun blades* he wields at once in battle); Elyth Talboskh, CN hm F4, merchant of Talboskh House; Pheln Aldtorth, LN hm F6, elderly merchant of the Manyheads Merchant Collective; and Maern Hammaver, CG hm W5, representative of Hammaver House.



Proceedings are by informal debate, followed by a round of formal speeches firmly kept short, and then a secret ballot. The Council typically takes four days, ending with a feast. Voting for positions on the Council is held in the spring, but the newly elected members don't take office until after the next Council, in the fall. Attacks on Councilors are punishable by instant execution, which prevents plots against Councilors-elect before they take office.

Mirabar's fleet is based in the outermost northern reach of Luskan's harbor, where the city has an armed enclave. It also has fortified bases on Ruathyrm and Mintarn. The backbone of the fleet is 30 heavy, ore-carrying cogs. All of these have fortified bow and stern castles, rams, and hurling armaments. Mirabar also has 30 smaller craft, mainly fast coasters and caravels.

The high captains of Luskan often threaten to seize Mirabar's fleet and seal off the harbor to it unless the annual harbor fees aren't paid well in advance. As the fee is now 76,000 gp per year, and it has been paid in advance for the next two decades, feelings in Mirabar are building towards war with Luskan. Mirabar is quietly hiring mages with battle experience. The mages are then paid handsome annual salaries to tutor lesser wizards and add to the magical defenses of Mirabar in anticipation of the strife to come. For security reasons, publishing maps of Mirabar is a

hanging offense, and I could find none outside Candlekeep and the vaults of noble families in Waterdeep. The agents of Mirabar have quietly done a very thorough job of destroying all maps of the city, so none appear herein.

I can say from my visit that the city has tall, slate-roofed buildings of fitted stone opening onto cobbled streets. The city is set within concentric rings of defensive walls so that beseiged defenders can fall back from the outer wall without leaving the city unprotected. A walled, well-guarded food garden grows in the center of the city. Guards told me that the garden keeps Mirabar less dependent on imported food. Luskan had tried to starve out Mirabar several times in the past, and Mirabarrans grew tired of eating fungi brought up from the Underdark, so the garden was commissioned. The area also features well shafts that bring up water from the deep Underdark—water warmed by the heat of the depths!

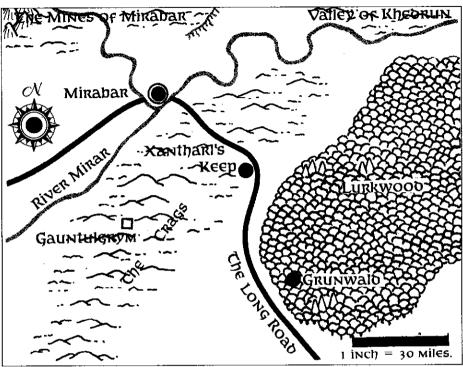
In the center of the garden is a shrine to Chauntea, and the city also houses a shrine to Tymora. The only other temples in Mirabar are underground, and they venerate the dwarven gods.<sup>4</sup>

The Royal Badge of Mirabar is an upright, double-bladed axe with a pointed haft and a flaring flat base. It is customarily rust-red on a black field, though the field is sometimes a deep purple, or white on ship pennants.

In all honesty, though, there's not much to see in Mirabar except in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For details of the dwarven deities, refer to FR11 *Dwarves Deep* and to DMGR4 *Monster Mythology*. Where details conflict, follow FR11, which details the deities that are manifested and worshipped in the Realms.





private homes of the wealthy and the business offices of merchant houses. There you'll see gems and polished rock inlays to rival the richest palaces of Faerûn, plus exquisite metal sculptures and mechanical toys worth thousands of gold coins. Metal birds sing in these places of wealth and ostentation, bell trees play different tunes depending on which sculpted leaf you push, and so on. They also feature gilded furniture and taps from which water runs-all the luxuries one can imagine.<sup>5</sup> The streets, however, are cold gray stone, with rock dust everywhere.

## Landmarks

The one spot of color in town (aside from window boxes) is the walled food garden at the center of town, but no one's allowed within throwing distance of that, except along the statue-lined avenue that leads to the Hall of Sparkling Stones. That massive, domed, stone fortress stands at the center of the city on a raised eminence or knoll, looming watchfully over Mirabar. It looks for all the world like a giant, watchful guard in helm and full plate, his shield drawn up before his face. Inside, its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>A word of warning to the acquisitive: Many Mirabarrans devise little tests for their guests. They set out small and valuable sculptures, gem-adorned hand mirrors, combs, toothpicks, and other baubles, and then watch to see if anything goes missing. On that observation, they base their opinion of the honesty of the guest. "Ye have been warned," as Elminster would say.



soaring central hall reaches to the roof, where a magnificent, many-hued glass window depicts the double axe of Mirabar encircled by flying dragons of various hues. The window casts its polychromatic light onto the ring-shaped Council table below. The polished, black marble table is pierced by four passages to permit access to the podium at its center.

The chamber floor is inlaid with scenes traced in gold, silver, electrum, copper, platinum, mithral, and adamant. The pillared, sculpted walls feature balconies stacked above each other at least six high. There may be seven levels, but it was dark, and the roof very high above me. Tiny beljurils (stones that give off absorbed light from time to time in little winking flashes) have been set here and there about the chamber's walls and balconies.

This is the marchion's palace and courtroom; the state chamber of Mirabar, where important visitors are received; and the meeting place of the Council. It is the most impressive room—in terms of grandeur—that I've seen in my life thus far. The architects set out to impress the visitor and succeeded with awesome ease.

The many balconies are crowded with Mirabarrans during the Council and at important trials. They share floors with small, wooden panelled meeting rooms. I'm told that these rooms have secret passages between them where Mirabarran agents listen, armed with wands of paralyzation and

hand crossbows loaded with sleepvenomed bolts, to prevent problems.

The rest of the city is row upon row of frowning buildings. The streets narrow as one goes towards the center of the city, and then they end at a wall. There's a circular street running around the ring wall to a staggered entrance, where another street starts. One street looks very much like another. The observant traveler will see an image carved in the wall at the head of each street, so one can find the Street of the Griffon, the Street of the Manticore, the Street of the Flame, the Street of the Anvil, and so on.

The city has four gates. Sunset Gate is on the west; Northgate is where the mine wagons rumble in and out almost ceaselessly; Eastgate is where the orc watch is mounted and most of the army is quartered; and the River Gate guards the bridge across the Mirar.

Most of the taverns in Mirabar are marked by a simple tankard sign-board. These are places where exhausted women and men go to have a pint of ale or a whiskey and to soothe aching limbs before stumbling home to bed. There's no entertainment, not much talk or noise, and nothing exciting to see or hear. Folk are too tired to fight or talk much.

Mirabar has many, many smithies, metalworkers, enamellers, chasers, etchers, stonemasons, and so on, each with his or her own shop. There are more dwarven artisans in the First Below, the uppermost subterranean

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>The city has six subterranean levels: the First Below, the Second Below, and so on. Ultimately, they connect with the Underdark via many branching, descending passages. The determined, lucky, and powerful traveler can travel underground from Mirabar to Ironmaster, Waterdeep, or even far Tethyamar (continued on next page)



level of the city.<sup>6</sup> It would take more than a year just to find and set foot in all of these shops.

Mirabar is a city of hard work, with a grim, gray efficient manner. It also has a heart of gold and precious things held guarded within, like the Mirabarrans who live there. Having visited this rough gem of the North, I can now understand the quiet, unshakable pride I once heard in the voice of a dusty merchant in a noisy Waterdeep tavern, when he said, "I've come all the way from Mirabar. I live there."

# The House of The Bright Blade

Shop

This establishment is probably the most popular shop in Mirabar among human tourists. The House of the Bright Blade is widely known in the North as the place to get swords that seem to have been made just for you. It's the smithy and shop of the noted swordsmith Zespara Alather. She toils here with the aid of six female apprentices. Two of these are humans and four are dwarves.

The front room is guarded by six warriors in full plate armor and four unarmored, undercover ex-thieves armed with wands of paralyzation. These 10 women wait outside for any thieving patrons to dash out. The secured room is full of glittering steel. There are hundreds of swords and daggers of all sizes, finishes, and prices.

#### The Place

The front room has polished, panelled, wooden vvalls, and a continual light spell cast on the ceiling that gives a bright, steady radiance. A special spell cast on the room by a wizard friend of Zespara allows her telekinese any blade she has made, or helped to make, into her hand. This works only while she is in this room. Blades will float smoothly to her. She can use this ability not only to impress customers and pull down high-hung blade with ease, but also to raise a blade barrier at will or to prevent any of her blades from being used against her; they simply will not strike her body.

#### The Prices

Swords and daggers of all sorts are available here at premium prices.<sup>7</sup> Zespara and her oldest apprentice, the magnificently bearded she-dwarf Calauthra Morgyr, can expertly choose a weapon with the right reach and weight for a customer. Blades can

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>(Continued) in the Dragonreach without seeing the sun.

Mirabarrans refer to near reaches of the Underdark, patrolled by the dwarves of the city, as the Seventh Below. This has led to expressions such as "he's sunk beneath the Seventh Below" to denote a depressed, unlucky, depraved, or penniless person.

Rumors persist that an alhoon (mind flayer lich) lurks below the city, enslaving the minds of dwarves it catches unaware, and sending them up into Mirabar to do its bidding.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>To find the price of any weapon in Zespara's shop, consult the price lists in the *Player's Handbook* and add 6 + 1d4 gp to the price given.





also be custom-made in two days for triple the usual cost, or in seven days for double the usual cost.

All of Zespara's work is of the finest quality, with clean, spare styling. Sadly, she does not ornament blades with gems or other gewgaws that might ruin their balance or utility, or wink back light betrayingly when drawn. She will, however, craft hilts and pommels with beautiful, sweeping-curve designs.

#### Travelers'Lore

One of the blades in Zespara's shop is a speaking sword. It contains the soul of an imprisoned mage, put there for his own protection by Zespara's wizard friend. This mage will refuse to give his name or otherwise reveal anything of his own nature. He will chitchat with clients, though. He is bored, and loves to hear about happenings in the Realms, particularly adventures, humorous occurrences, and what's going on in Thay. He will trade information for information, and is full of mage-lore about Thay, Aglarond, and Altumbel, where a lot of Red Wizards have hidden their refuges.

Zespara's shop stands atop the site of an old, abandoned temple to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>He broke ranks with the Red Wizards of Thay, and one member of that group has a tracer spell that can find the hidden mage when he is in his own form. The fugitive will continue to hide until that one Red Wizard of Thay is dead.



Auril. The temple can be accessed via a trapdoor in the floor of the passage between the shop and the smithy. Worshippers of the Frostmaiden keep returning to worship in the temple, and Zespara's apprentices keep having to drive them out, along with the aid of the dwarves who live in the First Below nearby. Auril's followers seem to be searching for something, as they attack the temple walls with pickaxes and prybars. Perhaps they seek hidden treasure or sacred items of power left behind by earlier worshippers of Auril.

## The Goblet and Gems

Tavern/Festhall



This is the only exciting and impressive-looking tavern in Mirabar. Its magically lit, golden goblet signboard beckons to passersby. Inside, they'll find a crowded room filled with music and dancing. There are many side booths where folk drink and enjoy the company of the "Gems" the place is named for. These skilled professional escorts hail from across Faerûn. There are fairskinned Northerners and petite, golden-skinned exotic beauties from far Kara-Tur. Each booth has a back way out for trips upstairs or for fast exits. Most of them link to the gambling rooms under the dancing hall.

Travelers and miners with money to spare and a thirst for drink and enticement find their way to this exciting place. By day, it's a quiet spot to chat or plot over a few drinks, but after dusk, it fills up quickly with folk who want to party.

#### The Place

The landmark feature of this establishment is the glowing giant goblet out front. Behind its golden glow, the Goblet rises darkly and impressively. It's built of black stone with smoothly finished edges and a curving roof in the form of a giant helm.

Inside, it has carpeted halls, dim lighting, sound-deadening pillows, tapestries, and smooth, stone walls. Glowing glyphs indicate the jakes and exits.

## The Prospect

This is the only wild place in all of Mirabar. The soldiers like a place to be rowdy, but they also like to confine such potential trouble to one well-watched place. This, hopefully, prevents enemy agents from instigating riots that might cover attempts to loot or set fire to places in Mirabar, or attempts to slay Councilors or important merchants.

Each Gem is a spy for the Council, well paid and expertly coached on observing, remembering what is seen and heard, and on self-defense. <sup>9</sup> There is a secret rope-and-pulley ele-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Each Gem is at least an F3; most are F4s and F5s. Some show this openly, and enjoy sparring with customers they know well, but most hide their skills until attacked.





vator hidden behind tapestries on each floor, and a ready detachment of 12 Axes can arrive from their quarters in the basement in a very short time if an alarm bell is rung on any floor. 10

The Gem's taproom is usually a deafening party of drinking, dancing, games of tag, wrestling, and throwgoblet. The halls sometimes get used for wild tag games, but are otherwise quiet and private. Festhall rooms have locking doors and are soundproofed. Each has at least two spyholes Gems can listen at. They're instructed to listen to any gathering for talk of unlawful acts or business hostile to Mirabar.

#### TheProvender

Food here consists only of bacon twists, spicy fried frogs on skewers, crackers, and tangy cheese slabs (called salties) intended to make one drink more. The drinks are all house liquids, but they're good indeed. There's an ale, a lager, a stout, a red, a white, a sherry, and even an imitation zzar.

#### ThePrices

Prices for drinks are 6 sp per tankard or tallglass, or if two are ordered at the same time, 5 sp each. The food is 1 sp per small plate, regardless of what is ordered. Rooms are available for 2 gp per hour.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Goblet was the favorite drinking place of Arendoum the Archmage a decade ago. The man wore a skull mask and turned all who displeased him into worms or slugs. Before he disappeared into another plane, he hid a magical gem somewhere in the Goblet.

It's a self-replenishing gem of spellstoring, able to hurl killing spells stored within. It can glow with a soft green faerie fire-like radiance, or emit a feather fall effect whenever grasped and willed to do so. Many have searched for this gem, but it eludes all detection magic. It's called the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>These soldiers are six F3s and six F4s. They dress in chain mail and are armed with maces, warhammers, daggers, short swords, and hand crossbows with 14 sleep-venomed bolts each (save vs. poison at -3 or fall senseless in 1d4 rounds; slumber lasts for 1d4+ 1 turns, despite any wake-up attempts; a successful save means target is immune to this venom for all contacts).



Mythongh Duarba, after its dead maker, whom the mage Arendoum seized it from

# The Sign of The Forgehammer

Inn



Visitors to Mirabar who aren't staying in the homes of Mirabarran hosts or the guesthouses of merchant companies are firmly directed by soldiers of the Axe to go to this inn. The Hammer stands with stables, stronghouse, and kitchen garden in its own walled compound just inside the River Gate. Guests are discreetly watched by Mirabarran agents.

#### The Place

The walls of the compound are adorned with the symbol of the inn. It's a vertical hammer, head uppermost. The same symbol appears on the stout, copper-plated, double doors of the inn. Beyond them is a dimly lit network of stone chambers, interlaced with chimneys, fireplaces, and dark, narrow stairs winding up and down between the rooms. The inn is cool in summer and warm in winter, and guest's rooms have bear-pelt rugs and canopied beds for warmth and comfort.

The layout of the inn is rather confusing, discouraging guests from visiting one another. There is a dining room by the entrance. The way to it is clearly marked at all stairs by an arrow accompanied by the drawing of a bowl of soup with steam rising from it.

### TheProspect

The Hammer is as warm and snug as any inn this far north, but it's always gloomily lit. Candle-lamps are plentiful; each room comes with two candle-holders, a candle-lantern, and a dozen candles, replenished daily. Guests get comfortable, private rooms with a daily hot-water bath.

#### TheProvender

The fare in the dining room of the Hammer is fairly standard for a northern inn: whole roast boar or deer, or lacking these, ox, mutton, or horse steaks. They're served with fowl such as pheasant, goose, and grouse, and small meats like muskrat or hare on the side.

The high points are a surprisingly spicy, cold potato-and-greens salad, and a delightful curry of golden rice (the hue comes from the many eggs used), lamb kidneys, almonds, and all the kitchen leftovers.

#### The Prices

Meals in the dining room cost 1 gp per head, plus ale or wine at 4 sp per tallglass or tankard. If one rents a room, the meal is included in the price of the room, along with stabling, baths, and laundry. The total fee is 7 gp per night.







# The Interior



his is the last frontier of the Sword Coast lands. It is a remote and mountainous region where orcs breed in

numbers enough to bring great hordes down on the human habitations every decade or so. Here, the isolated ruins of long fallen human cities stand, while dwindling numbers of dwarves cling to a few small parts of their once proud holdings. Dwarven legends still speak eagerly and frequently of the rich metal ores and gems that lie waiting under the mountain peaks.

That wealth alone seems to attract folk to the inhospitable fastnesses of the Interior. I've ventured only on the best trails and into the largest settlements in this land. This is adventurers' territory; its hidden ways and beauties are largely beyond the scope of this guidebook. Perhaps another two decades will bring forth a new kingdom of dwarves or humans here, or perhaps by then, all but Silverymoon may be swept away.

A few settlements of the Interior are covered in the section of this guidebook entitled "Other Places of Note in the North." These places include Citadel Adbar, the Citadel of Many Arrows, Deadsnows, Jalanthar, Mithral Hall, Olostin's Hold, and

Quaervarr. The Herald's Holdfast is not covered in this guide, I'm afraid, because they wouldn't let me in.<sup>1</sup>

The Interior is also home to three places I did manage to visit, albeit only quickly. I suspect I'd have to be a Harper to fully appreciate Everlund and Silverymoon. Weather and orcs imperiled my visit to far Sundabar, too, so its entry here is necessarily brief.

An energetic adventurer could spend several lifetimes scaling mountains and battling his way through nameless, orc infested valleys, and still not see all of the Interior. It is rumored to be the home of giant bears and the last place where dragons can be found in numbers. It is also the place where many of the truly powerful archmages (such as Tulrun, who once dwelt in proud Myth Drannor<sup>2</sup>) make their remote, well-guarded homes.

Even in summer, the lands of the Interior are given to sudden storms and blizzards. The unspoiled alpine meadows and craggy, pine-clad peaks seem endless. There are tales of entire valleys and keeps hidden away from the knowledge of humans.

There are also known ruins. Most have been stripped bare of anything that can easily be carried off by raiding orcs. A few still hold guarded or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster notes that readers interested in knowing more about the Holdfast are advised to examine FR4 *Code* of the Harpers. It holds more information about Everlund and Silverymoon, too.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster says those bold enough to want to find out more about Tulrun and his magical tent are on their own: "I wasn't about to inflict Volo on him; for his trouble tutoring me, he deserves some reward."



hidden treasure. Orcs lair in some, or keep clear of others because of the undead who walk there.

Surprisingly, the greatest city of the North rises out of these raw wilderlands. It's a place with culture and wealth echoing that of lost Myth Drannor. Silverymoon is a city that minstrels dream of playing in—a place of song and magic and learning. It's worth even the long trip from the Dragonreach lands, or from the shores of the Shining Sea. It would teach a lesson to those who customarily sneer at the cities of the North as the chilly, filthy hovels of barbarians.

One popular tale of the North is that of the Moondark Mountains. No sage is sure just which of the thousands of peaks visible from the upper River Surbrin are the Moondarks, but whoever finds them will be rich and powerful beyond the dreams of avarice. Their forested slopes hide abandoned elven citadels full of spell books and lost swords of power. The magic there is said to be far more strange and powerful than that left to the elves today.

The tales speak of bracers that allow the wearer to fly. The same items call into being full plate armor out of nothingness, and hurl bolts of felling force. The Moondark citadels also safeguard scepters that unleash claws or whips of lifedraining force. The scepters can also encase foes in stone, and then hurl them away to shatter against

obstacles or sink into watery graves. Many tales (no doubt grown greatly in the telling) describe mighty magic left behind by elves who took to ships that sailed the stars an age ago, never to return. Some accounts even say some of their skyships remain—ships, the tales insist, that are alive! The truth of all this awaits adventurers valiant (or lucky) enough to find the peaks.

More pragmatic guides of the North speak of a known underground city (akin to Gauntulgrym, under the Crags south of Mirabar) in the heart of a peak northeast of Silverymoon. It is now infested with monsters, bred, some say, by fell powers. There are alhoon, perhaps, or nagas, armed with several deepspawn

This city was once home to dwarves, humans, and halflings, who called it Tzindylspar. They dwelt there together, mining gems from a natural vein of rubies deep in the mountain. Most of the rubies used in Calimshan as currency, or to adorn the pectorals of Calishite women, were taken from this mine.

There are also stories of clifftop kingdoms ruled by winged folk. The easternmost mountains of the Interior are known to offer the richest concentration of griffons in all Faerûn. Cloud giant castles are sometimes seen drifting over these eastern peaks, and every so often, dragons will be seen in full, magnificent flight among the clouds, winging their lone and splendid ways into or out of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Alhoon (illithiliches, or mind flayer liches) are detailed in the *Ruins of Myth Drannor* boxed set. Deepspawn appear in FRII *Dwarves Deep* and in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Campaign Set* box.





most remote peaks.

Travelers in this region should beware of attacks from orcs, bugbears, goblins, monsters of all sorts, barbarians, raiding bands from Hellgate Keep, and large expeditions mounted each year by the Cult of the Dragon to seek dragons and their treasures in the high valleys.

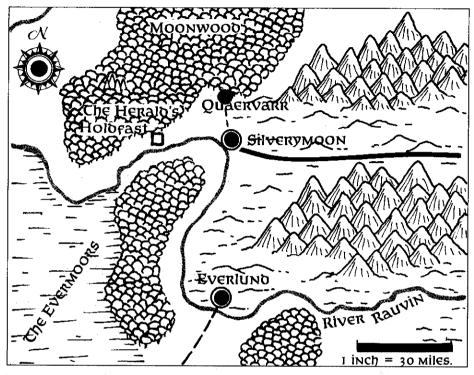
Large groups of travelers should never camp without at least a triple watch. Fires should be doused, for their light calls death from miles away. Lone travelers are advised to break their scent by crossing water several times, and to sleep on a rocky height, or better, on a ledge sheltered from above. Most of us, as the ballad goes, have only one life to lose.

## Everlund

Everlund is a walled city of 12,000 humans, elves, half-elves, and halflings, with a scattering of other races. It lies due south of Silverymoon, on the banks of the Rauvin.

Though it's the smallest and weakest of the cities of the Interior, Everlund is as tolerant as Waterdeep of various peoples, races, and religions. This is an attitude well befitting a caravan trading center. Everlund is the home base of many caravan masters, guides, hunters, mercenaries, adventurers, and Harpers. The standing army of 2,000 diligently seeks out and slays raiding orcs, goblins, bugbears, trolls, and other monsters of the wilderlands.





Another 250 adventurers and mercenaries can be called upon in times of need. Everlunians are known to fiercely defend their city, and are as wise in the ways of the wilds as any Uthgardt barbarian.

Many adventurer-mages, bards, and rangers dwell here, under the six Elders who rule Everlund. The Elders keep it part of the Lords' Alliance, actively opposing both the Zhentarim and the Arcane Brotherhood.

Somehow word got around that I was a Zhentarim agent—vile slander, I assure you—so my visits to Everlund and Silverymoon were necessarily hasty and largely covert. I did learn that Everlund is a city of trees, wild-

flower gardens, and little bowers (lawns encircled by screening stands of trees).

The inns and taverns of Everlund are on its outskirts, by the wall, and the center of the city is quiet at night—a place where lovers and plotters walk and talk, I'm told. Homes and shops rise out of the greenery in pleasant little clumps, so that one might be in a village in the Dales rather than in a city of the North. There's plenty of space for children to play in. Although the lanes curve and meander, it's hard to stay lost for long: broad, straight caravan roads cut through this pleasant scenery like the spokes of a wheel. Everlund is a beautiful city, with more



trees and grassy space than I'd ever seen in an enclosed space before. I wish I'd had a chance to know it hetter

### Landmarks

The city has five gates: Bridge Gate, Upriver Gate, Mountain Gate, Silver Moon Gate, and Downriver Gate; a quick look at the area map should make it obvious which gate opens in what part of the city wall.

I wasn't allowed to approach some places in Everlund close enough to report on them properly. These include the Harper fortress of Moongleam Tower (at least, I think that's what it's called)<sup>4</sup> and the Hall of the Elders, the seat of government in Everlund. The latter is a low, circular building at the heart of the city. Hard by it stands an old, battered keep that serves as the armory, and next to that are the six large barracks of Everlund's standing army.

There is a great bell used to sound the call to arms or, when battle goes ill, the retreat. The bell hangs in a frame in the open space beside the barracks, and it gives its name to the space: the Bell Market. This is the chief produce fair of the city. Opening onto the Market is All Faiths Hall, a shrine for the use of all good worshippers. The two remaining places of worship, located by Downriver Gate, are a shrine to Mielikki, the Lady's Tree, and a shrine to Malar, the Bloody Hunt.

# Places of Interest in Everlund

Shops

The Bent Bow Bowyer

5 5 5 5

This is an excellent archers' shop, opening onto the Bell Market. It is known for its everbright (nonrusting) arrowheads, some of which can be enspelled so that they can be located from afar (in other words, if an archer shoots an arrow into someone or something, it can be magically traced). The Bent Bow is also known for its custom-made bows, which can be designed to pull to the desired weight of the purchaser.

## Hethmeir's Highboots Corvisor

5 5 5 5 5

This is the best place to buy boots north of Waterdeep—truly a first-class corvisor! (For those where were not aware, a cobbler resoles shoes, repairs shoes, and sells premade footwear; a corvisor takes one's measurements and makes custom-made boots to order.) In fact, these boots are as good or better than any found elsewhere in Faerûn. Hethmeir and his four nimble-fingered assistants can work with incredible speed. An adventurer who brings them a dead beast and wants boots made from its hide can expect them

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For more about this and features of Silverymoon, as well as the Herald's Holdfast, see FR4 Code of the Harpers.



within three days. The price varies by size, design, and finish, from 50 gp a pair upward to as much as 1,000 gp a pair!

#### Taverns

#### The Dreaming Dragon



The Dragon is located nearest to the Downriver Gate, and is beloved of elves, halflings, and the whimsical. The Dreaming Dragon is the place to go if you love good harping and the eerie ballads of yesteryear. Its elverquisst is of the finest quality.

#### Mykhyn's Sorrow



Myklryn's, next to the Downriver Gate, is named for a human man who drowned in the River Rauvin while sailing downriver to see Waterdeep. It was his "sorrow" that he never made it there. His widow used his money to build this tavern. She's dead, but her three daughters run it now. Harpers are most welcome here.

#### Sordar's Cup



Sordar's Cup is a quaint tavern located by the Mountain Gate. Sordar was a local dwarf of legendary capacity for drink. He once won a bet by drinking three entire casks of wine in one evening. When he repeated the feat the next night, the odd human who'd lost the bet decided he had

best build a tavern to accommodate Sordar's drinking supplies. Sordar is long dead, but his cup (about the size of an upturned war helm) can be seen on display here.

#### The Stag at Bay



Named for a sumptuous tapestry hung on its taproom that depicts an elven hunt, the Stag is located near the Silver Moon Gate. It caters to visiting hunters, adventurers, and those who'd like to fool themselves into thinking they're intrepid. Patrons outdo each other describing the perilous adventures that have befallen them in the "Savage Frontier."

#### The Old Sword Sheathed



This tavern stands just inside Downriver Gate. It's a tavern like all of those you've heard of in wonderful fireside tales. The Old Sword is a ramshackle place where everyone's a friend, the dart and dice games never stop, elders are always telling tall tales and young people are always trading jokes. It serves a huge wine list and something wonderful called "butternut beer." I was enchanted, and urge everyone who strays into the Interior to make a special trip to try it. Folk in Everlund say the tavern is where you'll meet your mate for life. I saw plenty of adventurers, ladies of the evening, colorful old souls, and other interesting folk there, too.



#### lnns

By and large, the inns of Everlund are better than in most cities of the North

#### The Battered Hat



Guides such as 'the famous defender of Everlund, Ruldorn the Storm Ranger,<sup>5</sup> like to gather at this inn. It's run by two halfling families, and it's decorated with dusty old stag's heads and older maps. It stands just inside Silver Moon Gate.

The inn is named for a piece of dilapidated headgear that can now be seen perched atop a wyvern's skull on the lobby wall. It was all that Nander Gultree, the halfling who built the inn, managed to wear out of his first encounter with a dragon!

#### Danivarr's House



This is the oldest and largest inn of the city. It's a rambling mansion joined to the one next to it by a number of rickety, covered, flying bridges. It's got a loyal clientele, and it's almost always full. This is the place to go if you want to meet interesting people (retired adventureres, elves who think they have a royal claim to thrones that no longer exist, and gnomes with delusions of grandeur).



#### The Olorin



This is a large, new inn, near Mountain Gate. Many travelers end up here when they can't find room elsewhere. Though it's new and clean, it's rather soulless. All of its furnishings were bought from a shop in Waterdeep and brought to Everlund by river barge, but unfortunately, they look mass produced.

#### The Phantom Knight

SSSS BBBB

This inn, by Bridge Gate, is named for its ghost. It's haunted by a silent,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>A description of Ruldorn is in Appendix I.



mustached apparition in full plate armor who appears to guests who will soon face great danger. He makes warning gestures, sometimes pointing helpfully to needed or important items.

The Knight is a large place, known for its fresh, hot bread, its cream pastries, and its hot baths (each room has its own copper tub). The inn is popular with caravan merchants and, adventurers alike.

#### The Seeking Arrow



This inn, by Downriver Gate, caters to rangers, hunters, and guides. It stands between the Lady's Tree (a shrine to Mielikki) and the Bloody Hunt (a shrine to Malar). Its walls are adorned with many trophy heads, and its lobby "desk" is a glass case containing a wolf's skeleton of truly astonishing size. The wolf (killed by the proprietor's father) looks to have been as large as a bear. Warning: One of the inn staff is a rather simple soul who likes to put a stuffed snake in a random bed that he makes every morning.

## Silverymoon

This city of 26,000 is often called the Gem of the North. It's a beautiful city of ancient trees and soaring towers, with curving lines in almost all its stonework. Silverymoon is considered the foremost center of learning and culture in the North. It's a happy place where humankind, elves, half-

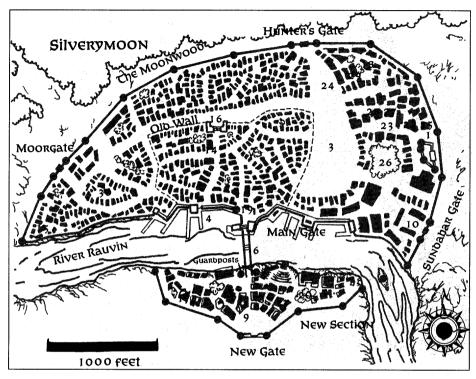
elves, gnomes, halflings, and dwarves all dwell in peace together.

Much of this peace and goodwill is due to the influence of powerful local mages, such as the Mistmaster and Shadowcloak, and the Harpers. Both forces are allied with the kindly, diplomatic ruler of Silverymoon, High Lady Alustriel. She is a mighty sorceress, and is rumored to be hundreds of years old.

The oldest part of Silverymoon stands on the north bank of the Rauvin, at the place where its usual northward flow turns abruptly west. The newer part of the city is primarily warehouses, paddocks, and caravanrelated businesses. The two sections are linked on the south bank by the famous Moonbridge, a magical construct of usually invisible force that shines silver in the moonlight. The central span can be "turned off" to protect the city from invasion or to allow tall-masted ships to pass.

Silverymoon is also protected by a number of wards that detect the presence of evil beings, and the uses of magic in certain areas. I've been unable to learn much about the wards, but rumor in the city has it that a strong mythal is in place around that part of the city east of the great open Market. It's a permanent magical field like the one that cloaks Myth Drannor. It augments some magic, turns other spells wild, and negates still others. Certain areas in the High Lady's Palace have an Inner Ward that requires possession of a token to allow entry at all. The rest of the Palace is heavily guarded by mages.



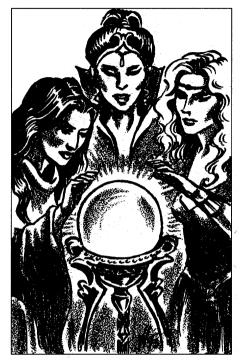


## Silverymoon

- 1. The High Lady's Palace
- 2. The Star Court
- 3. The Market
- 4. The Docks
- 5. Arken's Invocatorium
- 6. The Moonbridge
- 7. The Golden Oak Inn & Temple
- 8. East Garrison Barracks
- 9. West Garrison Barracks
- 10. Sundabar Commons
- 11. Lady's College
- 12. The Map House
- 13. Vault of the Sages
- 14. The Inn of the Wayward Sages
- 15. The Bright Blade Brandished

- 16. Helmer's Wall
- Miresk's School of Thaumaturgy
- 18. Utrumm's Music Conservatory
- 19. The Dancing Goat
- 20. Mielikki's Glade
- 21. Adbar Trading Coster
- 22. Fortune Hall
- 23. The Halls of Inspiration
- 24. The House Invincible
- 25. The Tower of Balance
- 26. The Silverglen
- 27. The Temple of Silver Stars
- 28. Dawndancer House
- 29. Everdusk Hall
- 30. The Hammer and the Helm





The city's army is the Knights in Silver. They number over 500, and patrol for seven days' ride around the city. They are assisted by many Harper scouts and mages. When they must turn back orc hordes, awesome mages gather to fight with them.

The Royal Badge of Silverymoon is a thin crescent moon, curve upper-

most and points to the right and down, a single star sheltering under its uppermost horn. The moon and star are both silver, and are displayed on a royal blue field, or graven in stone to mark the boundaries of Silverymoon's claimed lands.

Silverymoon boasts a conservatory of music, a school of thaumaturgy, a great library, parks, and the castle-like residences of many noble folk. There are also temples to Helm, Lathander, Milil, Mystra, Oghma, Selûne, and Tymora and shrines to the dwarven and elven gods, Mielikki, Silvanus, and Sune. The city even has a temple to Shiallia, a local deity allied to Silvanus and Mielikki.

Silverymoon is a member of the Lords' Alliance and a haven for Harpers. It is also noted for its musicians, its cobblers, its sculptors, and its stonemasons, as well as the mages. The latter are gathered here in greater numbers than in any other city of the Sword Coast lands except Waterdeep. Their might alone keeps the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan, Hellgate Keep, and the orcs at bay. If the mages were to vanish tomorrow, the civilized North might well be swept away in blood and ruin.

<sup>6</sup>A kindly palace clerk furnished me with details of the city's head priests.

Helm: Vigilant Master Erssler Thamm, an LN hm P13

Lathander: The Mornmaster Onadar Ryl, an NG hm P15.

Mielikki: The Ladyservant Tathshandra Tyrar, an NG hf P7

Milil: Songmaster Beldor Thrivvin, an NG hm P14.

Mystra: Magister Thukmuul Teleshann, an NG hf W17.

Oghma: Chief Priest Sandrew "The Wise" Obouldyn, an LN hm Pll. The First Singer is Irithym Winiter, an LN hm R7

Selûne: The High Moonmistress Shanathera Moonsoul, a CG hf P18.

Shiallia: High Priestess Izolde Threecoryn, a CG hf P8.

Silanus: Willa O'Greensleeves, an N hf D6.

Sune: Shandalara Sindertal, a CG hf P9.

Tymora: Luckpriestess Aratha Sul, a CG hf P9. Her predecessor, Shermata Cheng, was recently killed while adventuring.



## Landmarks

I was unable to explore Silverymoon as I wanted to, because of an unfortunate rumor that I was gathering intelligence for the Zhentarim, Therefore, I must deal with the Gem of the North only slightingly here. I can tell you that the main city, located on the northern bank, is the shape of a half-circle. Its walls are pierced by three gates: Moorgate on the west, Hunter's Gate on the north, and Sundabar Gate on the east. A road runs around the walls on the outside, paralleled by a street on the inside. The Moonwood starts just beyond it. The High Lady's Palace is just within the walls on the eastern side of the city, and the temples and homes of the nobles are to the north of that. The latter is in the part of the city that lies east of the large open space known as the Market.

The Market cuts right across the city from Hunter's Gate to the shops at the Docks. There are rumored to be many dwarven tunnels under the city, and as much life below as above ground, but I was unable to investigate this properly. I hope to greatly expand my coverage of Silverymoon at some later date.

I wasn't allowed into colleges, libraries, temples, or noble houses, but I can provide very brief summaries of the important places.

The High Lady's Palace is the seat of power in Silverymoon. It's properly called the High Palace. Courts and assemblies are held at the Star Court. Sundabar Court is an assembly area for eastbound caravans. The Market and the Docks are also popular areas in warmer weather.

Silverymoon has facilities to service many faiths. The many temples in Silverymoon include the Golden Oak, a temple to Shiallia that doubles as an inn; Mielikki's Glade; Fortune Hall, the temple of Tymora; the Halls of Inspiration, shared by Oghma and Milil; the House Invincible, a temple of Helm; the Tower of Balance, a temple of Mystra; the Silverglen, a grove of Silvanus; the Temple of Silver Stars, a temple of Selûne; Dawndancer House, a shrine to Sune; and Everdusk Hall, an elven shrine.

## Place of Interest in Silverymoon

Schools

Arken's Invocatorium

This college of magic used to be a stone fortress.

Lady's College

5 5 5 5

This is another college of magic, sponsored by Alustriel.

Miresk's School of Thaumaturgy

\* \* \* \* \*

Another of the city's schools of magic.



## Utrumm's Music Conservatory

This school of music has an excellent reputation in the North.

#### Libraries

The libraries of Silverymoon, and indeed, most libraries throughout Faerûn, charge a reading fee for their use. Reading fees average 1 sp per room per person/day. Most libraries sort books by topic, and put them in different chambers. One room will be all atlases, one all histories and accounts of travels, one genealogies and records, and so on. Each room has a custodian, and no copying (or, of course, defacing) of works is allowed. Fees for rooms containing rare books, maps, and the like are often higher: 1 gp per person/day or more. Works discussing magic are in this "valuable" category, but actual spell books are never available in this manner.

In Silverymoon (as in most Faerûnian libraries), copying services—by a library scribe—are available, usually at a cost of 50 gp per map, or 2 gp per page. The cost increases significantly if a close copy (an attempted duplicate) is desired. Unless a close copy is requested, most scribes simply transfer the information, in their own handwriting. A portion of a page costs the same as the whole page. Those who can memorize and only want a few pieces of information profit most by this arrangement.

#### The Map House



Properly, this is the Old Quarters of the Vault of the Sages. It's also referred to as the Herald's House. Maps and genealogies are kept here. There is a reading fee.

## The Vault of the Sages



This is the newer part of the Map House. All of the books, including tomes about magic, are kept here. There is also a reading fee here.

#### Shops

#### The Blue Bottle

Winery



This shop offers the largest selection of wines north of Waterdeep. Its proprietress (who is also the local priestess of Sune), Shandalara Sindertal, sells local winter wine, and has wild tasting parties where guests slip together into a huge tub of wine and drink all they want! Shandalara also makes the best winter wine in the whole region. Wine runs from 4 gp/tallglass to 10 gp/bottle to 25 gp/tallglass to 100 gp/bottle.

#### Dornsar Leathers

Tanned Goods



This is the best place in town to buy belts, leather armor, gloves, and



baldrics. Heldon Dornsar and his staff custom-make leather armor with a six day turnaround time. Heldon loves to make leather masks; some are astonishingly lifelike representations of birds or beasts.

#### Flamebar Canvas

Canvas Shop



This store specializes in awnings, tents, and sails. It carries a wide range of adventurers' tents and cloaks at all times, but is famous for its distinctive flame silk sails, widely used on local river barges.

#### A Handful of Stars

Navigational Aids



This shop is named for its star charts, but also sells maps, driftglobes, timed burning candles, and lanterns. It's run by the clergy of Selûne. This dim, crammed shop draws explorers, veteran travelers, and those who dream of far-away places, some of whom can always be found here, chatting with the staff.

#### Hornhard's

Game Shop



Here, rabbits hang on a line like washing, and there's a tank of live fish, river crabs, and eels. The proprietor, Duthlun Hornhard, is a master slinger—and is always ready to talk about slinging, sell slings, sling stones and sling bullets, and to suggest the best places to use them.

#### Lyndal's Ropes and Cables

Cabler



This store is a source of good garottes, but it is also the only place east of Triboar where one can expect to find 600 continuous feet of hemp rope (30 gp). More often, rope is sold in 50-foot coils (5 gp).

#### Mornbright's Dyes

Dye Maker



This shop carries dyes of most colors, and several different types of fabric. It is noted for cloth that shimmers in moonlight, or even glows faintly in darkness. Dyes come in two forms: cakes or bottles of liquid. Cheap dyes (sold in handsized cakes) average 2 cp to 1 sp. More expensive dyes are usually small glass vials of liquid, and cost 7 sp to as much as 20 gp.

### Optym's Blade

Armorer



This is a very good weapons shop. The proprietor, Helios Optim, is an expert knife-thrower, and he stocks a huge selection of throwing knives and daggers. His axes are of dwarven make, and are also of the finest quality.



#### Phlamryn's Shields

Armorer



This is a good place to get bracers, shields, and helms. Phlamryn is also a contact for hiring adventurers. He was once an adventurer himself, and spent many years guarding mine convoys out of Sundabar.

#### The Shining Scroll

Magical Wares



Xara Tantlor casts spells for hire and sells potions to fund her adventuring and spell seeking.<sup>7</sup> Xara is a diminutive, bustling woman who guards herself and her shop with a collection of hidden magical items (worn on her person), and a loyal companion faerie dragon, Villynk (who considers herself the true owner of the shop).

#### Theldymir's Crystal

Glasswares



Theldymir's is a great place to buy glass, mirrors, crystal balls, eyeglasses and the like. Its aged owner is an expert at identifying where glass came from, how old it is, and what it's made from. He can cut glass, blow glass, and grind lenses to order—for those able to afford his services (some wizards have spent up to 2,000 gp for a monocle!).

#### Uldon's Cleaver

Meats



Aumador Uldon is a fat, jolly giant of a man who is always seen wearing an apron, and is always (or so his wife says) covered in blood. He specializes in garlic-and-bird meat sausages (2 cp/link). Dwarves love his pepper sausage (3 cp/link).

#### Taverns

### The Bright Blade Brandished



This tavern is favored by adventurers because it's luxuriously furnished and kept by folk who are friendly to everyone, no matter how uncouth, unwashed, strange, dangerous-looking, or badly wounded they are. Service is attentive without being intrusive. The serving maids know their regular clientele by name, and steer rivals and enemies apart, introduce lonely newcomers to those with similar interests, and even guide the drunken home. They are aided by resident wizards, who use magical items with telekinesis abilities to whisk drinks to and from the thirsty over the heads of folk-and to snatch away suddenly drawn weapons or spoil spellcasting before trouble can get properly underway.

Several curtained alcoves and booths open off the main taproom—and I sat down in one, looked around,



and found this was one of the best tayerns I've set foot in.

#### The Dancing Goat



This noisy, bawdy place is where professional escorts and enthusiastic single folk alike go to meet people they can get excited about. The dance floor—and the jakes, and the dim hallways, and the shadowy rooms upstairs—are busy from dusk 'til dawn. Don't come here if you'd like a little quiet; revelers can get quite persistent.

#### The Hammer and the Helm



Only dwarves are really welcome here, but comely females of all races, and folk dwarves consider "swordbrothers" (trusted fighting companions) are also allowed in. The sight of a room full of stout, bearded dwarves roaring out drinking songs, turning back flips, and tossing tankards to each other without spilling a drop is—well, overwhelming. Certainly deafening.

The drink is strong and splendid, and there's even complimentary roast fowl wings and buttered toast to go with it. Be warned: Half-eaten bits and pieces of these are apt to become missiles when someone delivers a particularly good (or bad) jest.

I've seldom seen so many folk having so much fun with such gusto—and I've *never* seen dwarves behave like this before or since. There are worship-caverns to the

dwarven deities beneath the tavern. Don't even ask about them if you're not a dwarf, though, or it's the street you'll find instead, possibly in a single swift and involuntary flight.

#### Helmer's Wall



This tayern gets its name because much of it was once a gatehouse in the old city wall (now torn down). It has become the favorite haunt of the many students who come to Silverymoon to study at the colleges-and like all such places, it's a bustling center of excited talk, constant toasts, pranks, romance, and drunken folk getting up on tables to make speeches almost pompous and confused enough (or poetry bad enough) to deserve all the small items thrown their way. The ale is good, and the wine even better, but beware strangers snatching up your flagon to toast someone or something.

#### lnns

#### The Golden Oak



This excellent, expensive inn is also a temple to Shiallia, a local deity tied to Silvanus and Mielikki. (Be careful not to wantonly destroy seedlings or harm any animal babes while in Silverymoon or the High Forest lest you direly offend her.) I was not allowed near the place.

I was told it's very beautiful and has a live oak tree growing up



through the taproom, with little lanterns hanging down from its boughs over every table. The rain comes in, so in stormy weather the taproom empties quickly to cellars downstairs and meeting rooms that open out from the taproom on all sides, a few steps up.

#### The Inn of the Wayward Sages



This inn, near the center of the city was recently damaged in a fire and rebuilt. Its rooms are cozy, but the furnishings are on the shabby side. In winter, I'm told, the small fire grates do little to throw off the chill that pervades the place. The food—particularly the roast pheasant in cream sauce—is excellent.

Several stories compete to tell how the inn got its name. The most popular seems to be that sages stayed here when they left their dusty library studies to taste the delights of the town. The one I like best is the persistent tale that the inn was built by the local evening escort Meereldil Shorncrown, famous in her day for her beauty, as an investment that could both house her and earn money for her in her declining years. Its building, the tale goes, was entirely financed by coins she made while entertaining the sages of the city's colleges and libraries and visiting devotees of Oghma (thus, "wayward sages"). It is true that Meereldil did live out her last years as a resident.

## Sundabar

Once a dwarven city, this fortress is now home to 36,000 humans. Most of these humans descended from refugees of Ascalhorn (now Hellgate Keep). Sundabar is the northeasternmost defensible post of civilization in the North. Thus, it serves as a base for many bold explorers, adventurers, and prospectors operating in the perilous wilderlands around the Fork.

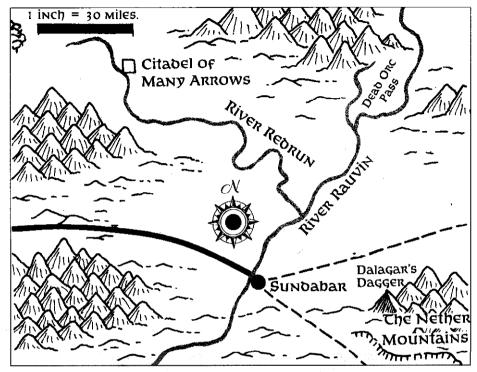
The Lords' Alliance and temples of Helm across the North sponsor the Sundabarian army of 2,000 wellarmed, veteran soldiers. This army seems to alternate between fighting orc hordes and fighting raiding parties from Hellgate Keep, Sundabar is also home to the famous Bloodaxe Mercenary Company. One member of this company has risen to become Master of Sundabar. Helm Dwarf-Friend<sup>8</sup> rules the city wisely and well, keeping it in the Lords' Alliance. He also allocates the money taken in by the city to patrol the roads often, and to keep the city ready for war. This is no small issue. The city's coffers are deep enough that they once hired the Flaming Fist mercenaries from Baldur's Gate to slaughter an orc horde.

"The Master's Take" is a flat 5% tax on the sale of all goods in the city. This tax is willingly paid by local merchants, who see it used directly for their benefit.

Sundabar has huge, guarded granary caverns below the city, and it also has deep wells. This prevents the town from being starved out by a siege.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Helm is currently an NG hm F15.





Sundabar trades with Citadel Adbar, Everlund, and Silverymoon. The city also trades below the surface, with dwarves from that part of the Underdark known as the Fardrimm. Sundabarian merchants are the exclusive dealers in the surface world for many dwarven products.

Sundabar also has its own reputation for excellent artisans. The woodworkers of Sundabar make wonderful carved furniture, musical instruments, and handsome and durable travel chests. Sundabar also exports long clay pipes and caltrops that find their ways across Faerûn in trade.

Dwarves come from all over the North to a certain rift deep beneath Sundabar. This geologic site is known as the Everfire. Here, the dwarves forge the finest blades known in Faerûn-blades that readily take enchantments, and outlast the people who wield them. The Everfire is guarded by a dedicated band of dwarves fed, armed, and healed by Sundabarians. This band, known as the Vigilant, must often fight off drow, duergar, and greedy humans seeking to gain control of the molten-rock rift. The Vigilant report that evil is rising in the ruins of Ascore to the east, as well as in Hellgate Keep, and mon-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>These typically cost 5 gp in the North and 8 gp in Waterdeep. In more distant cities, or where competition is scarce, the price may be 10 gp or more.



sters have been coming through the Underdark from that direction in increasing numbers.

The Fardrimm is not a wealthy region: its lodes have been largely worked out. Dwarves say that much metal lies northward, however, under the Coldwood and the Ice Mountains, and atop the nearest peak east of Sundabar. That would be the westernmost fang of the Nether Mountains, known as Dalagar's Dagger. There, for some unknown reason, many aged and ailing dragons go to die-wyrms of the black, blue, and green species. They typically perish in a suicidal dive onto the sharp pinnacle. Their bones litter the upmost slopes. Among their skeletal remains wink the treasures they bore: rings, pendants, and even loose gems and coins that were once glued to dragon bellies by means of ancient dragonhide oils and ointments. The Dagger's almost vertical lower faces are treacherous and crumbling, and the mountain is almost impossible to climb, so most of the treasure remains unclaimed. An unknown entity guards the peak against aerial forays from Hellgate Keep. Some say it's a faerie dragon, others a ki-rin.

## Landmarks

Like Mirabar, Sundabar is a city of stone, a frowning, no-nonsense fortress with little to delight the eye, and little welcome for the ambling

sightseer. This is a place of work. Indolence and slick ways are not looked upon with favor. Excessive curiosity is also frowned on. This is another city whose fear of spies from Hellgate Keep (and also barabrian scouts, Zhentarim, and humans hired by orcs) has made maps of the city illegal. Strangers who poke about are apt to be questioned by the watchful city soldiers. They take suspicious people to the Hall of Vigilance (the local temple of Helm) or the Hall of Everlasting Justice (the local temple of Tvr). There, priests detect lies while questioning is going on.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, no map of Sundabar appears here. I can tell you that the city is circular, with double walls. There's a moat in between them, rumored to be stocked with man-eating eels (I doubt they'd last, being frozen each winter). The city stands on the east bank of the Rauvin, and has three gates: Rivergate in the west, Eastgate in the east, and Turnstone Gate in the southeast, facing Turnstone Pass and Hellgate Keep, its evil uncomfortably close.

Harsh winters and summer storms make outdoor markets, and even shopfront awnings, unknown in Sundabar. Everything is indoors, so look carefully for signboards.

Most of Sundabar's famous and skilled woodcrafters are located around the city's central cobbled Circle. The Circle is the huge, open space surrounding the tall castle of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>The Hall of Vigilance is governed by High Guardian and Priest of the Hall Ruthard Fourl, an LN hm P11. The building is located just within the Rivergate, on the west side of the circular city.

The Hall of Everlasting Justice is administered by Reverend Judge Triandiall Truthammer, an LG hm P10. This building stands just inside the Eastgate, next to the slaughterhouse. The priests insist that it's just a coincidence.



Master's Hall. Caravans form up in it, and it's kept clear to give shepherds a place to drive their stock into in the event of orc attacks, and as part of the city's defenses. The Master's Hall bristles with catapults and heavy crossbow guns. If the outer parts of the city are invaded, survivors could retreat to the Hall and slaughter attackers trying to cross the open space of the Circle. All in all, the city is a safe refuge, but not a very attractive place to visit.

## Places of Interest in Sundabar

#### Shops

All the largest shops face onto the Circle. Sundabar's carpenters and woodcarvers are justly famous; about a dozen vie for the title of best. Visitors interested in these crafters can just ask the way to their shops. Not only do all locals know where they are, but they make a game of trading shops, so from season to season, they move around and around the central, cobbled Circle.

All of Sundabar's woodworkers are very expensive (all are rated at 5 coins), but all do first-rate work. Many visiting merchants buy an extra chair or stool here for their own use.

## Blackraven Wagons, Doors, and Shutters

Woodcrafter



Hundarr Blackraven is one of the dozen or so best of Sundabar's justly

famous carpenters and woodcarvers. He makes simple, large, and sturdy items of the three types he deals in with very strong joints (so they'll hold together when the work of another might not). Hundarr prides himself and his shop 'prentices in working both very well and very quickly; a custom-order door might take only an afternoon.

#### Feldar's Wheels and Wagons

Coach and Wagonmaker



Where Hundarr Blackraven works quickly, Ildar Feldar (another of Sundabar's best) is slow, painstaking, and fussy. If a piece of wood shows grain he doesn't like the appearance of—even after it's been finished, and is in place on a piece—he'll replace it. His creations often take months and are usually ornate and beautiful. Feldar specializes in making grand coaches and ornamental carvings for adding to existing wagons.

### Furjur's Flying Carpet

General Store



This shop is owned by the famous Waterdhavian merchant Furjur the Flippant. He's actually an absentee owner—running the shop in his stead are six delightful girls. The shop does indeed have a dusty *flying carpet* for sale—for the paltry sum of 45,000 gold pieces! The place is also crowded with brass lamps, skimpy clothing, beaded curtains, and other items from the



warm lands of the Shining South. It's the closest thing Sundabar has to a junk shop. This makes it vitally important to folk who need, say, a replacement window pane in a hurry, and know the nearest shop is in Silverymoon! The store is on Northwind Street, which bends and twists northeast from the Rivergate to the Circle.

## Gullaxe's Stairs, Rails, Poles, Staves, and Handles

Woodturner

Ondabar Gullaxe is another of Sundabar's best woodworkers. He specializes in smooth-turned wood, and makes handles for all tools and weapons, including polearms of the finest quality. His talent is for weeding out wood with inherent weaknesses and faults, and in balancing something perfectly at the first attempt after once hefting the pike head, axe blade, arrowhead, or other metal part that needs a handle attached to it.

## Hammerlar's Fine Floors and Housework

Carpenter

Olen Hammerlar's works, of all the fine Sundabarian woodcrafts, will be most familar to common folk: He's a house carpenter, all whistles and chewing tobacco, whose speciality is the "one-day porch." He has the knack for lightning-fast work, and can bring his own horse-driven sawmill to any-

place his wagon will go. He restricts his work to within six days' travel from Sundabar. He promises to put up any cabin or palisade in a tenday or less (except in winter).

#### Krystryn's Shelves

Woodcrafer and Cabinetmaker



Krystryn Danard, another of Sundabar's finest woodworkers, is tall and thin, with floor-length, very straight brown hair. It hangs around her in a halo, and is usually full of wood chips and curled shavings. She works and lives alone, demanding complete privacy for her art, and makes shelves, strongchests, and wardrobes. Krystryn always gives her work a very smooth finish. Some of her rivals insist she uses magic to do it.

#### Larautarn's Chairs

Woodworker

Ommagol Larantarn is one of the excellent woodworkers of Sundabar, but looks more like a cook; he's a very fat, pompous man with two little, pointed mustaches and a pursed and plum-colored mouth. He's never without an open wine bottle or three as he works, and sings loudy (and badly) as he toils, gleefully hurling finished legs and seats over his shoulder to crash into the far wall as each one is done at the lathe. The wall is hung with heavy tapestries, and more are wadded up on the floor below it—Ommagol has no wish to damage his work.



Ommagol has such a keen eye that he can make a stool and then create another of exactly the same size and shape without referring to the first.

#### The Lutery

Instrumentmaker



Jonstal Haerdrun is a grim, sharpchinned giant of a man who makes all manner of wooden musical instruments. He's an accomplished musician, but refuses to perform or to tutor, spending his free time in hunting for just the right trees deep in the northern forests. He often hires guards on these long, perilous expedition-and on more than one such expedition has proven himself a deadly swordsman as he cut his way out of orc ambushes. He's something of a mystery man in Sundabar; some say he hails from Neverwinter, and others from Rashemen or points east. He has very white skin, a slight build, and a long mane of unruly coal-black hair that he wears tied back in a long tail.

## Mith's Carved Whimsies and Woodcuts

Woodcarver



Mith Tlalant is a soft-voiced, child-like man who delights in playing with children and takes an almost innocent delight in the world around him. His hand-sized wooden carvings of birds, monsters, and people find their way as far afield as fabled Kara-Tur, and even Maztica. They cost as much

as 700 gp each, but collectors resell them for thousands in gold.

### Naeth's Nails, Pegs, Locks, and Other Woodfinery

Fine Woodcarver



Naeth Robilar is another of Sundabar's fine woodcrafters. He is perhaps the most skilled carver of them all, and whittles wooden locks, nested spheres, and similar exacting pieces. He can look at any lock mechanism that is missing part of its workings and draw, explain: or even whittle the missing parts (if those parts can be shaped in wood).

#### The Old Anvil Smithy

Blacksmith

This noisy, sooty barn of a place stands just inside Turnstone Gate and is the abode and workshop of master smith Alabuth Helfyn. He makes armor, anvils, and caltrops—an export for which Sundabar is widely known. These spiky devices were invented in Sundabar (independently of other places in the Realms) to break deadly mounted barbarian charges in places where no wood large and long enough could be had to fashion rows of pointed stakes.

#### The Old Block

Furnituremaker



Faernden Laurauth and Basmel Torl-



star are the two bickering, pettish coowners and master craftsmen of this shop. To hear them fighting, you'd never think they were among Sundabar's "best" anything—but the fine furniture they produce, especially easy chairs and blanket chests, is ordered in the hundreds by Waterdhavian nobles, rich families in Amn, and folk even farther afield. Barges go up and down the Rauvin all the time with loads of their output. Owning Old Block furniture is a badge of wealth and good taste even in places as far off as the Tashalar and the city-states around the Lake of Steam.

## The Old Fireblower Pouch & Pipe Shop

Tobacconist

Talbut Minshar's old, narrow, crammed, and strong-smelling shop stands on Lantbalar Street about midway along its straight run from the Cirle to Turnstone Gate. He sells exotic tobaccoes from all over Faerûn, makes a few himself (adding crushed mountam juniper essence and winterberries dissolved in winter wine to imported tobacco leaves, for instance), and is famous (ranked among Sundabar's best) for his elegant carved pipes. He even makes a flute-like pipe that can be played as an instrument as one blows smoke out of it!

#### Old Ornar's Beds and Tables

Furnituremaker

Ornar Myntul is the grand old man of

Sundabar's woodworkers—he trained many of the best. Now, in the twilight of his years (he's seen 112 or more winters!), he contents himself with whittling walking sticks that have fearsome faces for amusement, while importing and selling fine, but plain, beds and tables to those who can't afford the work of the other fineworkers.

Most of Sundabar's best charge 30 gp for even the smallest and most insignificant piece, and large canopied beds or the like can often run into the thousands of gold pieces. Ornar's most expensive bed, by contrast, is 18 gp, and most of his stock is 8 gp or less. He is an expert at identifying woods—even from charred fragments.

#### Shyndle's Lutes & Pipes

Instrumentmaker



Anar Shyndle is the only one of Sundabar's excellent woodworkers not to have his shop on the Circle. His abode and workshop stands just inside the Rivergate, and there he makes the musical instruments said to be the best in all the North (saving perhaps a few workers in Silverymoon). "Pipes so good, the satyrs play 'em" is his motto, and it's true that some satyrs once stole all the pipes in his shop. What use they put them to, none can say, so Anar made the logical assumption. None of them has returned to correct him, he told me cheerfully. Shoppers should be aware that Anar and Jonstal Haerdrun of the Lutery are deadly foes.



## Thimm's Shingles, Shakes, and Finefinish Tabletops

Carpenter and Roofer



Olosk Thimm is a placid giant of a man who spends his days putting replacement legs and tops on damaged furniture, except when he's up on a roof, replacing it. He was once attacked by a bugbear patrol when splitting shingles alone in the forest and used his axe to slaughter the lot of them, bringing their heads back as proof. This was long ago, but folk still talk of Olosk calmly bowling the heads down one of Sundabar's streets to frighten an aggressive neighbor who'd been pestering him over some incident or other. Needless to say, he was successful Merchants beware. He doesn't seem like the sort one should anger.

#### Tavenns

The city has many mediocre taverns. Both inns and taverns here serve food, generally of the boar-and-beans, ribsticking-but-simple, almost unseasoned variety.

### Halabar's Horn of Spirits



This filthy place sports broken furniture and broken-down patrons to go with it. It stands—slumps, rather—on Lanthalar Street, although patrons often reel out onto the street with their tankards or roll out into it fighting. A place to go if you want to break

things.... Why not? Everyone else has been there before you, and done it already....

#### The Maiden at Midnight



This tavern and festhall on the Circle is the only exception to the rather depressing tavern prospects of Sundabar. It's justly famous in the Interior. This delightful place can readily be found by its huge, gently glowing signboard. It depicts an elegant lady looking shocked, with one hand to her mouth and the other clutching at the front of her evening gown.

Inside, the Maiden is dimly lit and hushed. The walls are thickly hung with carpets and tapestries. The staff of highly trained escorts includes lizard women, gnomes, halflings, and sprites, as well as human women.

The famous Trapdoor Room, favored by adventurers, is in the cellar. There drinks are served down through the ceiling by means of small trapdoors over each table. Table dancers descend into the room and then rise back out by means of drop bars.

The Maiden is always crowded, but never seems so. It's a fun place, broken up into seemingly private alcoves and corners by means of many tapestries. It has a ward that prevents all fires, including magical ones, from burning. This is to keep the tapestries from catching alight. Once they caught fire the place would burn down in a few breaths! Because of this problem, the kitchens and dining room are in a separate



building next door. They may be easily reached via a tunnel. The ward also prevents smoking, so those who dislike the clouds of heavy smoke in most taverns enjoy coming here.

### The Sighing Sylph



This tavern is a quiet neighborhood drinking spot. It stands on Northwind Street, and is unremarkable—except for its rather tasteless, life-size wooden door-statue of an immodest sylph. Pranksters often carry her off and perch her somewhere else in the city-someplace interesting, whimsical, or just embarrassing (such as in the chancel of a temple, or on the roof of a rich merchant's home). Alternatively, they paint her interesting hues, or cast cantrips on her to make her say rude things, glow in interesting places, or appeal to beckon passersby. Would that the tavern behind her were half as interesting.

## The Tabard & Tankard



This overpriced tavern stands on Antar Street (which runs north from Northwind Street just inside the Rivergate, along the inside of the inner city wall). Its name alludes to its haughty pretentions to serving scholars, heralds, titled nobles, senior clergy, and powerful wizards—some of whom may actually have enjoyed a drink here. If one doesn't care about money, one can can enjoy relative privacy here (for the high prices make patronage scant). It's not a

horrible tavern, just a dirty, tired, unremarkable one. The walls are covered with shields, buntings, cloaks, and tunics emblazoned with arms and devices of those who drank here (or so the tavernmaster would have you think). I recognized several badges of noble families who've been extinct for much longer than the tavern's been here, I'm afraid.

#### Unshimble's Ugly Face



This rowdy tavern is named for its signboard, a gigantic, carved, and lamp-lit screaming goblin head. This sign guides all but the blind to it, even though it's tucked away on a little lane off Antar Street. It is the gathering place of 'prentices and laborers, who come here surly, aching, dog tired, and ready for a fight. Many nights, they get one—or two, or a score. Beware flying bottles: This is the sort of tavern your mother warned you about—er, if she did.

#### lnns

#### Baldiver's

titi bbbb

This old, quiet, elegant inn is decorated with dark wood paneling, leather hall railings, and old, faded portraits of local knights and heroes. It is for the older, quieter visitor; others are refused entry or ejected if they beome unruly. Many retired warriors stay here in the coldest months, abandoning their chilly homes in the



city. The owner, Baldiver, a retired warrior himself, gives them reduced rates (2 cp per room/night). Baldiver's looks like an old castle sprawling along Northwind Street for a fair distance, and local legend insists that it can be defended as one if the city is attacked, having concealed armories and the like at the ready.

#### The Firestar Chariot



Located on Undle Lane (which runs due south from the Circle), this establishment is named for its vividly painted signboard, bought from a carnival in Tethyr. The board depicts two fire giants riding into battle on a chariot of flames, drawn by a flaming winged horse, and trailing stars.

Inside, the place is given over to loud music and even louder furnishings. It is patronized by young folk looking for thrills, and is prowled by so many evening escorts that some folk of Sundabar consider it little better than a festhall. Thankfully, the rooms are luxuriously furnished and sound-proofed. A complimentary bottle of "firestar wine" (amber sherry, doctored with a little ruby cordial, but very good nonetheless) is included with every room each evening you stay. Rooms run 9 sp to 2 gp/night, depending on size and appointments.

#### Malshym's House



This inn on Lanthalar Street caters to merchants, goodfolk, and other

travelers who want no fripperies or nonsense in their accommodations. It is basic, unpretentious, and unexciting, but safe and clean. Would that more inns could make that boast in truth

#### The Trumpet

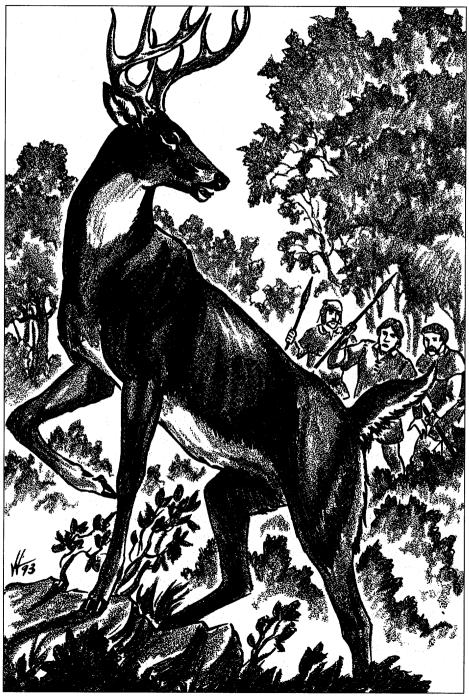


Merchants, adventurers and other seasoned travelers stopping in Sundabar usually come to the Trumpet. They stay here because of the quiet luxury and the tolerance. Soldiers leave patrons alone, and eavesdropping is done magically and discreetly (if any is attempted). The inn isn't hard to find: Its signboard is a brass longhorn from Amn that stretches a full 20 feet out across Mattock Lane.

The inn is the home base of such adventuring bands as the Claws of the Crag Cat, the Ready Blades Band, and the Company of the Feystag. The Trumpet specializes in putting patrons in touch with Sundabarians who discreetly provide needed services. These include healing, disposing of carrion, moneychanging, selling and bartering weapons and armor, purchasing thieving tools, and so on.

Innkeeper Gaurlar Darym and his staff are famous for calmly handling anything. The tale is still told in Sundabar of a baatezu being summoned into the lobby of the Trumpet. It was coolly destroyed by the staff, right before they ejected the mage who'd summoned it.







# Delimbiyn Vale



ften forgotten by many are the easternmost lands of the North. Overland travelers are the exception. These

folk often stagger into Llorkh or Loudwater more dead than alive, heartily glad that people dwell in Delimbiyr Vale!

The term *Delimbiyr Vale* is always used to refer to the upper reaches of the River Delimbiyr (also known as the River Shining) and its tributaries. The Vale reaches from the westernmost fringes of South Wood up the river valley to its headwaters in the Nether Mountains. The High Forest is not considered part of the Vale.

The traveler may sometimes hear about the *Upvale* and the *Greyvale*. The first term refers to the open grasslands between Tall Trees and the Far Forests, now controlled by Hellgate Keep. The Upvale used to be a series of pastures and tilled farms held by humans, despite almost annual orc raids.

The Greyvale consists of the grasslands drained by the Greyflow and the Loagrann, the three-branched river that joins the Greyflow at Orlbar, northwest of Llorkh.

Old maps also name the three headwater streams of the Delimbiyr, from west to east, as the River Aulantrar (or Deepingstream), the River Starsilver (or Starsilver Stream), and the Norlnryn.

Travel in the Vale is dangerous. One must beware of bugbear raids, increasing forays from Hellgate Keep, and the tightening grip of the Zhentarim. Because of this situation, my visits to this area were brief. Hence, Loudwater gets a rather hasty treatment here, and Hellgate Keep, Llorkh, Orlbar, and Zelbross are relegated to the section of this book entitled "Other Places of Note in the North."

Even before the shadow of evil fell across Hellgate Keep, these lands were perilous. Bordered on one side by wild mountains and on the other by a vast wild wood—perhaps the largest in all Faerûn—this is a territory roamed by monsters and rapacious humanoids.

The Dale also holds the ruins of Netheril, notably the Fallen Lands, across the mountains to the east of the Vale. The ruins are haunted by fearsome creatures warped by the fell magics of decadent human sorcerers.

Today, the Vale is becoming a battleground between the evil forces of Hellgate Keep and those of the Zhentarim. Whatever befalls, the strife is sure to go hard on those caught between. The hardy folk who dwell in the Vale will be the ones to suffer. Meanwhile, they make meager livings as guides, hunters, prospectors, farmers, and the like. The future of the Vale does not look bright.



# Loudwater

This town of 4,000 lies on both sides of the River Shining. The two sections of the town are linked by a beautiful, arching stone bridge, built more than a thousand summers ago by the dwarf lirikos Stoneshoulder. Once an elven community, it is a human town today. A quarter of its citizens are the half-elven descendants of the vanished elves of Eaerlann.

Loudwater is a beautiful place. No two of its wooden buildings are alike, but all are overgrown by vines and hung with plants until they seem to have grown out of the forest. This village is a gardener's delight. Beautifully tended plants are everywhere—in houses, on roofs, and on every patch of ground, including the roadways. The streets are planted in tanglemoss, though they give way to bare earth in busy areas.

Streets wind and curve, meandering to take the best view or an interesting way, and the pace in town is as slow and measured as the lanes that carry it. Huge old trees line the riverbanks, and gardens and bowers are everywhere. The town has no walls, just an earthen rampart and a ditch. Both of these are planted with flowers.

The closest thing to ugliness in Loudwater are its four harborside warehouses and the cooperworks west of them. A wide pool in the river gives the town a harbor. This is usually crowded with flat-bottomed skiffs, coracles, and barges for fishing or trading up and down the Delimbiyr. The pool was cut to carry the river flow around rocks that caused the rapids for which the town was named.

The folk of Loudwater make their livings farming, fishing, and providing caravan services to and from Llorkh and points east. Loudwater's patrolled lands extend for two days' ride up and down the river from the town.

The shadow of the Zhentarim now hangs over Loudwater, but it still remains independent. The town is defended by 300 warriors, divided into patrols of 20. The militia is commanded by two officers known as *gauntlets*, Harazos Thelbrimm and Kalahar Twohands.<sup>1</sup>

Loudwater is ruled by its high lord, who for the last fifty-odd years has been Nanathlor Greysword.<sup>2</sup> Nanathlor is a widely respected warrior and a careful, just administrator. His gray beard and long, flowing gray hair mark him almost as much as the bastard sword that always rides on his back in its baldric. The people of Loudwater love their lord and their town, but in the dark days to come, they may well lose both.

Nanathlor is a friend of the Harpers, who come to slay or lead astray the increasingly numerous

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Harazos is an LN hm F6, and Kalahar is a CG hem F7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Nanathlor Greysword is an NG hm F11. He is of nobility from the far-off island realm of Nimbral. Nanathlor came to the North to start a realm of his own, and thus was Loudwater founded.



Zhentarim agents scouting the town. Both groups also seek the elven magic said to be hidden in the grassy elven burial mounds on which the oldest part of Loudwater is built. Some townfolk have cellars linked to the tombs by secret doors.

# Landmarks

The High Lord's Hall is the walled manor house at the center of town. The local warehouser in Loudwater, Agrath Dundai, told me that there's a crypt under the High Lord's Hall that's haunted by undead to this day. Specifically, he said, its haunters are the restless remains of former high lords, some of whom dabbled in dark magic.

Also of note is the All Faiths Altar, a shrine open to the devout of all nonevil faiths. In bad weather, travelers sometimes sleep in its open forechancel.

# Places of Interest in Loudwater

All of the sites covered here are on the south side of the river, except for the Enchanter's Ecstasy.

# Shops

# Jolym's Barrels & Packing

Cooper



Jolym custom-makes packing crates. Prices depend on the sizes, but they go from 5 sp to 5 gp per crate. Most

crates that two people can carry go for the minimum. The shop also sells stock crates for 3 sp each, and barrels for 3 gp each. Handkegs sell for 1 gp each.

#### The Risen Moon Market

Grocer



Across the street from the High Lord's Hall is the best produce shop in town. The Risen Moon sells fresh farm crops, except in winter. It always stocks delicious, smoky-flavored mushrooms that are grown in the store's own cellar.

#### The Watchful Turtle

Warehouses



The Watchful Turtle rents guarded, unheated storage space for 1 sp per crate per month. If you use their space for less than a full month, you still get charged the full rate. If your goods are picked up within a tenday after deposit, though, 4 cp will be refunded.

The place is named for the carved stone heads on the arched Loudwater bridge next door-fanciful, snarling pig-snouted things that supposedly resemble the heads of dragon turtles, and stare endlessly at the warehouses.

As one might expect, the proprietor, Agrath Dundai, a bewhiskered old man, has a wry sense of humor. He's full of tales about Loudwater and the lands around.



#### Tavenns

# The Merry Mer-She

On most nights, this wild place is a tumult of whirling dancers, loud minstrelry, bawdy jest, pranks, and frequent fights. It is not a place to relax in, hold a conversation (or even to hear someone shouting something your way), or to enjoy a drink. The beer is rather watery, and is all too apt to be splashed your way—or worse, come to you still contained in a hurtling tankard. This is a good place to come if you like bawling out endless songs or having mindless fun. Ladies, expect to get pinched; squires, expect to get punched.



#### The Old Owl

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This quiet, family place is favored by elders. It is given to quiet conversation, card playing, and silent smoking. Loud and boisterous revelers are shown the door. The proprietor, a retired warrior, sets his prices low. Drinkers have little variety to choose from, but his home-brew is surprisingly good.

#### INNS

# The Enchanter's Ecstasy

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This cedar-roofed, fieldstone lodge is a pleasant, serviceable place to sleep, but is unexciting unless one fancies cute and kitschy statuettes of smiling wizards, mermaids holding fish that spout endless cascades into a fountain in the lobby, enspelled clocks that chant the passing hour in fluting voices, doors that thank those who open them, chamberpots that light up for easy use in the dark, and soon on. The name of this place says it all—thank the gods and goddesses that the whimsical wizard that enspelled all this has moved on (to parts unknown) and isn't still adding new "delights" to astonish the tasteful traveler. The whole effect of the place is rather overpowering. The inn nestles in the midst of stone-gnome infested gardens on the north bank of the river, just west of the houses of Loudwater.



## The Scarlet Shield

SSS BBB

This average roadhouse stands on the "Highbank" (equally away from the river, or south) side of the market. The warm, yeasty smell of rising and baking bread permeates this establishment most days. Its furnishings are deliberately rustic and one is tempted to say, so are its cleanliness and service. The seldomseen help is cheerful and generous when apportioning meals or handing out bedding, so a stopover here can be pleasant. The inn is named for a rusting old shield once borne in battle by the inn's builder, a retired warrior who is now dead. His nephew runs the inn and is full of tales that leave one thinking his uncle was the greatest warrior in all Faerûn, the tamer of a race or two of dragons, and the founder of Waterdeep, Anm, and Calimshan all before highsun.

# Other Places of Interest in Delimbiyr Vale

There are few safe places to see outside of Loudwater in Delimbiyr Vale. However, two spots are worth mentioning. These are a pair of businesses that aren't within the borders of any town. Regardless, they're interesting places to visit, especially for travelers who are on their way to or from Loudwater.

#### Tavern

# The Smiling Satyr

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This delightful place stands on a hilltop of oaks and beeches about eight farms southwest of Loudwater. The winding lane to the tavern is marked by a roadside wooden carving of a dancing satyr with pipes. A permanent *magic mouth* spell emits soft piping whenever anyone approaches within 20 feet of the statue. Local lore gays that when the moon is full, the satyr sometimes whispers dark secrets of treasure and treachery.

The tavern's proprietor, Arvyn Umbryl, is an ex-adventurer of unknown accomplishments. He owns two large fields, in which caravans can camp, on either side of the hill. A stream offers water to both fields, and both have outhouse privies, firepits, and free firewood. The Satyr has thus







become a favorite spot for adventurers, guides, and mercenaries to gather.

Inside, the flagstone floor leads to two huge hearths, one at each end of the taproom. Here, boots, socks, and feet can dry, while toast, sausages, and cheese are browned on long forks.

The walls are festooned with monster skulls, riven shields, old weapons, and other adventuring trophies. Specifically, note the two old battle axes crossed on the wall behind the bar. These animate to protect Arvyn and his staff. They are battleaxes of dancing that obey only his command.

A hundred tales of buried loot,

treasure maps, and hidden caches cling to the Satyr. If even a tenth of them are true, it holds great riches for those who know where to look.

#### INN

#### The Nighthunt

SISS BUG

This quiet, comfortable place is a day's ride east of Loudwater, south of the trail to Llorkh. The building is a wood construction, heavily enspelled to prevent fire. It is low, sprawling, and cloaked in pines and maples. The Lodge is named for a ghostly boar hunt said to gallop into the nearby South Wood on certain nights.

The inn has always been a little-known favorite with adventurers, hunters, and outlaws wishing to avoid drawing attention to their presence. Its proprietor is Ildur Arntar, a former ranger<sup>3</sup> who lost his powers after an incident he won't talk about. He is a friend of the Harpers and a fierce foe of the Zhentarim. He is very outspoken about the Zhentarim's tightening hold on Llorkh, so his days may be numbered.

Ildur's staff includes his wife Shaltana, four daughters, and six former adventuring comrades of unknown wealth and powers. The six adventurers are somewhat legendary in the area, famed for their abilities in battle. Two of Ildur's daughters are growing restless, looking to take sword as adventurers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ildur is now an NG hm F16 (STR 17, DEX 16, INT 17, CON 17).



# Other Places of Note in the North



o traveler has time to go everywhere or to see everything. There are many places in the North that I haven't yet

seen. These include hundreds of small holds and hamlets hidden away in remote vales and all of the nonhuman communities of the High Forest, as well as the various monsterinfested ruins of Netheril.

Here I've assembled information on places that I've learned about through other reliable travelers, hearsay, and rumors. I hope that this will nevertheless aid the traveler who comes upon a place I couldn't see firsthand. Please understand that what I report here is secondhand lore and must not be trusted as much as what I've reported to you. Here are also covered places that, because of their size or the briefness of my visit, do not merit an extensive discussion elsewhere.

# Places in The Dessarin

# ULuvin

This way-village of 600 or so farmers and cattle ranchers is located where the trail northwest from Secomber meets the trail running southeast from Ironford. At Uluvin, the Ironford Trail turns northeast up the Unicorn Run. Most of the traders dealing with Delimbiyr Vale avoid Uluvin. Instead, they use the road west from Secomber, meeting up with the High Road south of Zundbridge.

The town is a dusty, spartan place with few trees, thirsty throats, and a rather bad tavern called the Black Bull's Tail. It also has a surprisingly pleasant and clean inn named Where the Maiden Dances (sorry, it's only a name, not a local attraction or pastime). Uluvin is a sleepy place where peddlers sometimes sell trinkets, and folk turn out to chat with travelers to hear the news.

#### Tavern

The Black Bull's Tail

!!! DO

This isolated roadhouse has no competition, and it shows. The beer is watery, there is nothing to be had but very old winter wine and execrable whiskey, and the drafty, echoing taproom has all the charm of a warehouse. There are private, rentable drinking rooms in the back that are much more welcoming than the taproom (1 gp per person/night, or 25 gp for the exclusive overnight use of a

<sup>&#</sup>x27;To this, Elminster made a comment to the effect of "Six of one, a half dozen of the other."



person or party). Some travelers use these as rather overpriced sleeping accommodations, although they were intended as meeting rooms and places for the locals to hold revels.

#### lnn

#### Where the Maiden Dances



This is a well-appointed inn for such a sleepy village. The staff has manners and consideration equal to the best anywhere. Rooms are small, and furnishings old and well-used, but everything's clean and shows evidence of thoughtfulness. The inn's name comes from the fact that it is built atop an ancient elven grave where of old a ghostly image was sometimes seen at night: a barefoot, lone elven maiden in a long gown, dancing to unheard music. It was said to be a sight of breathtaking beauty, but only those who've had far too much to drink claim to have seen her since the inn was built.

# Places in The Coast Phandalin

This village is located northeast of Leilon, where the road that runs from the High Road to Triboar fades away into a mere trail. The road was largely abandoned long ago after orc attacks from the mountains east of Leilon. The orcs even paid human mages to work magic powerful

enough to bury the road in some places and hurl down small keeps in others.

Under the leadership of a chieftain called Uruth, the orcs expanded their holdings steadily, building a realm they called Uruth Ukrypt (roughly, *Home of Uruth*). Its name is echoed today in the Kryptgarden Forest.

Too lazy or stupid to support themselves by farming, the orcs soon decimated the huntable game in their realm. They subsequently took to raiding human holdings for food. Some 400 years have passed since then, during which time concerted human attacks on the orcs ended their kingdom and almost drove them from the area entirely.

Phandalin had been an important farming center before the orcs conquered it. When they were driven out, the village was left largely in ruins, and it remains so today.

No one lives there now but monsters, though passing hunters and rangers often camp in one of the more secure buildings. It has three deep wells that can still be used.

The orc attacks also forced gnomes and dwarves to abandon a mountain delve near Phandalin where they were mining mithral together. This lost lode was called Wavecho Cave because the roll and boom of waves beating on the Sword Coast shore could be heard in the natural cavern.

Some dwarves of the North dream of returning there, and the gnomes who dwell near Waterdeep consider it their rightful home. Both races constantly search the mountains and the



subterranean passages for a way back into Wavecho Cave. Rich stores of mithral and magical items of gnomish and dwarven make were enchanted in Wavecho by human mages allied with the other races. These enchanted items are said to still lie in the caves and delvings. (Note that this is not the same place as the monsterinfested dwarfhold called South-krypt.)

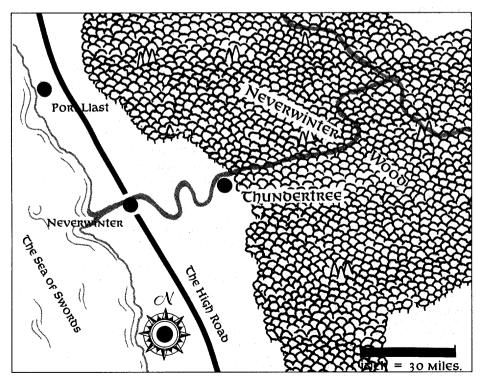
The orcs attacked Wavecho in force, and in the spell battle between the defending mages and the wizards hired by the orcs, the land was changed, the ceilings of many caverns and chambers collapsed, and the very location of Wavecho was lost.

The countryside near and in Phan-

dalin is now best suited to adventurers and those who like to hunt monsters for sport. There have always been rumors of rich treasure lost in the fighting in the area that is just waiting for a lucky or persistent venturer to find it.

# ThunderTree

This small, quiet logging hamlet of about 90 folk stands on the south bank of the Neverwinter River at the western edge of Neverwinter Wood. A good trail links it with the nearby city of Neverwinter, and all of the choice timber cut here goes down that trail to the shipyards, housebuilders, and carpenters of the city. Travelers will





find only a pavilion to sleep in and not much of interest to buy except some small pelts from local trappers.

A local ranger, Ansal Bloodshoulder, serves as Thundertree's informal leader. He works with the town's woodcutters to ensure that new trees are planted wherever timber is felled. He checks that trees are carefully chosen before they are cut, and that vines and diseased trees are cut out and burned. This careful method of logging has met with grudging approval from elves living nearby in Neverwinter Wood.

# Places in The Frozenfar Fineshear

This cold, grim mining city is located on the northern turn of me Sword Coast. It exists solely because it is the site of unusually rich veins of copper and silver. The earthen rift that holds the veins was exposed long ago by the explosion of an ancient volcano or possibly by something falling from the sky. The rift ends in a huge, bowl-like crater, its walls sheared away and blackened by fire (hence the name of the place). The city arms reflect this. They show a crossed blade, pick, and shovel at the base of a leaping orange flame on an ice-blue field.

Fireshear is iced in for at least half of every year. This time is known locally as *lock-in*. Outsiders are gen-

erally not welcome. Miners, however, are hired by agents of Fireshear in cities up and down the Sword Coast. Typically, these folk will be paid 100 gp per month, plus room and board. Miners arrive in the city during the summer on ships that carry in gear, food, and traveling professionals, such as healers, escorts, and others needed during the long, frigid winter months.

Fireshear is ruled by three senior merchants: one each from Mirabar, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep. These three execute policies and command the militia. The local military includes 10,000 miners out of the total city population of 15,000. The senior merchants also regulate the hiring of adventurers to patrol and gather information.

Fireshear's inhabitants suffer occasional orc and monster attacks, as bears and crag cats<sup>3</sup> roam the area. Wolves come down from the mountains in the winter, but wolf attacks are always worse when the city tries to keep sheep for its own consumption. Keeping sheep is attempted every few years until severe winter weather or persistent attacks decimate the herd and the last few sheep are done away with for city table fare.

I have tasted one piece of the local fare that was prepared for me by a lady of Fireshear when I was in Neverwinter. It was a delicious salmon dish steamed in a shallot-andwine cream. According to her, this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ansal Bloodshoulder is an NG hm R9. According to Elminster, he's also a Harper and one of the few humans who knows his way around the depths of Neverwinter Wood. He can be hired as a guide for short trips in and around the wood and as far afield as Triboar and Xantharl's Keep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For details of the crag cat, see Appendix III of this guide.



can be had in several city restaurants: notably the Leaping Leucrotta near the docks and the Green Garden near the northernmost corner of the walls. I have not personally visited either, so no ratings appear here.

Fireshear has no inns. There are rooming houses, and a guesthouse maintained by the city. The latter is a place of Spartan accommodations where guests are closely watched. The town does have banks—they're really stronghouses to store the miners' money. The widespread use of the banks reduces the number of coins in circulation and discourages gambling and thievery.

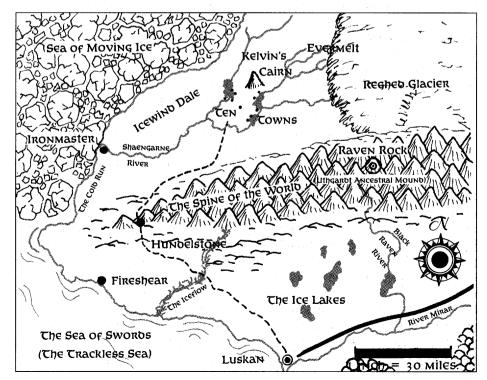
Fireshear is home to taverns galore. The best is the Singing Manti-

core on Makepeace Street, and the wildest is the Drunken Dwarf. The Dwarf sits on its own wharf, and ejected brawlers land in icy water or fall down a 10-foot drop onto thick ice, depending on the time of year.

Nearby Luskan has had its eyes on Fireshear for a long time. Waterdeep hires privateers to escort trade vessels to and from Fireshear during times of open water. This prevents attacks from "mysterious pirates" who always seem to set sail from the harbor of Luskan.

# Hundelstone

This village of 1,200 or so folk stands in the icy mountain pass that pierces





the Spine of the World northeast of Fireshear between Icewind Dale and the more southerly realms. Bad winter storms often imprison travelers in the pass, so Hundelstone is used to hosting unhappy visitors.

It is a place of low houses with sharply sloped roofs that shed snow and boulders falling from the mountains. The houses are built low to the ground, as most of the living space is cut out of the rock in a series of cellar rooms. The folk who live here are largely dwarves and gnomes, but there are also about 250 humans. Most of the dwarves and gnomes make their living by carving out mining tunnels into the Spine of the World. Their lengthening reach has increasingly brought them into contact with monstrous predators of the Underdark, so many of the humans here make their livings as monster slayers. These folk are paid 100 gp each month plus 25 gp per kill (to be shared by those who fought each beast). Adventurers often come here for a summer or two to hone their battle skills and gain experience in the Underdark.

Most of the other humans spend their days as guides, guarding and directing caravan trade between Icewind Dale and points south, or as hunters in the crags. Game is always plentiful near the pass because of sunflower moss, a rich, green foliage named for its buttercup-like spring flowers. The moss grows rapidly, supporting a huge population of rock hares. People usually slay the foxes, wolves, raptors, and crag cats that prey on the hares, so the hares are always plentiful.

Hundelstone boasts 100 skilled smiths, and one can buy any amount of ironmongery there. There are five guesthouses where one can eat jugged hare, hare stew, curried hare doused in brandy and then flamed over a fire on skewers, and even fried, spiced hare.

There is little else of note in this handy refuge. It is named for a famous dwarven smith of long ago, Hundel Hurler-of-Hammers. His tomb is said to be in a high mountain cave somewhere near the village that is guarded from thieves by two magical war hammers that fly and spit lightning.

# Ironmaster

This remote northern mining community is sometimes called "The Ironmaster," after the title of its long-dead founder. Only dwarves are welcome in Ironmaster, so I wasn't able to visit. I did, however, find a dwarven source willing to talk about his city.

The deepest delves of Ironmaster reach into the largest iron deposits yet found in Toril. The mountain dwarves of Ironmaster refine this into pots, pans, and forge bars that they sell in Fireshear and Mirabar.

Over 9,000 dwarves dwell in Ironmaster, under the rule of Lord Clanmaster Strogue Sstar.<sup>4</sup> The arms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Strogue Sstar is an LG dm F9 who is known to wear magical armor and to use several magical items in battle. Unlike many dwarves, he has no distrust of magic and does whatever he must to keep his city strong.



of the city are a red anvil on a gray, diamond-shaped field (the long points of the diamond are vertical). This device can be found stamped on many a forge bar (block of refined metal), and on stone, menhir-like markers around Ironmaster's valley. Nondwarves within the boundaries outlined by these markers are attacked on sight. Humans who are truly ignorant of the dwarven ban on intruders may be spared, but the dwarves still confiscate all weapons, spell books, maps, and the like. They may put the humans on a ship or forcibly guide them, blindfolded, through Underdark passages to Hundelstone, releasing them at night in unfamiliar, broken terrain.

Of the 9,200 mining dwarves who dwell in Ironmaster, more than 3,000 are trained and equipped warriors. The clanmaster keeps his standing army of 300 dwarves busy patrolling the land and the underground passages.

Ironmaster fills its valley. Its stone towers rise like spikes from the valley floor, and the rooms and passages of the city weave in and out of never-melting ice and the stone of the valley walls. The Shaengarne River flows down from Icewind Dale to meet the Sea of Moving Ice here, plunging through Ironmaster Vale in a ceaseless roar. The dwarves siphon off its waters with over 60 scoop-tunnels and viaducts. They've also built an elaborate series of spill basins and diversions to avoid flooding during the spring runoff.

Ironmaster Vale is the first break in the towering cliffs known as the Cold Run. These cliffs run northeast from Icefang Point, west of Fireshear.

Ironmaster's food comes from several sources. Subterranean caverns provide mushrooms, as evidenced by the popularity of roast boar in mushroom gravy in town. Hunting and spearfishing are common along the Shaengarne and the Cold Run. Anything that isn't available by those methods is acquired by trade. Dwarven ships go back and forth from Fireshear with goods, and other items are traded through underground routes using secret surface caves in the Spine of the World near Hundelstone.

# Places of The Interior Citadel Adbar

This dwarven city does not welcome visitors much. This should be no surprise, as most of the visitors it gets are orcs or other monsters seeking the swift death of its citizens. The Citadel is a fortress, perhaps the mightiest castle north of Amn. It has ditches that can be filled with flaming oil, bridges that can be drawn up or swung down into deep pits, concentric rings of walls that can be defended one by one in the event of a powerful beseiging army, and so on. The Citadel has withstood over 60 orc horde attacks thus far. Each of these were determined sieges by over 10,000 orcs at a time, and usually 10 times that number.



Despite its forbidding ways and remote location, Citadel Adbar is a trading city. Around 14,000 dwarves dwell there, forging and smelting finished work from ores brought from deep underground. Their work creates quite a din and clangor, and a permanent cloud of smoke hangs over the city. These factors make a visit to Citadel Adbar very unpleasant for most folk. By and large, only metal traders and the most desperate or daring peddlers go there.

Orcs and prowling crag cats<sup>5</sup> make the lands around the Citadel so deadly that it's safer to bring food caravans here through the Underdark via Mirabar and Mithral Hall! These caravans bring mainly fruit, which the dwarves delight in eating during the chill depths of winter.

Goods made in Citadel Adbar are considered top rank. The Citadel's swordblades, axeheads, and pickheads are used all over the North. Most human smiths in the communities of the North use forge bars (blocks of refined metal) from Citadel Adbar for their work. The dwarven smiths here also make armor and other weapons, and mine mithral. Adbar armor is still the best dwarven make this side of the Deep Realm.<sup>6</sup> The recent opening of long-abandoned Mithral Hall has made the largely mined-out mithral deposits of Citadel Adbar less important.

The fortress that humans see is only the small surface part of an

underground dwarven hold known as Adbarrim. The Citadel exists to provide a secure connection with the World Above and to keep the smoke, noise, and stench of metalwork out of the dwarven homes here. Miles upon miles of chambers, passages, and suites have been carved out of solid granite, enough to house 60,000 dwarves in comfort. Like other dwarven communities in Faerûn, the number of dwarves here has been steadily dwindling.

King Harbromm is noted for his attention to strategy and detail, and is himself a master smith. The city's badge is his personal forge mark. It's an upright, single-bladed handaxe enclosed by a circle of flame done in red on a silver field. The king employs human adventurers in patrols outside the city walls, and he also keeps 200 dwarves on the battlements of the Citadel. Another 1,500 are ready to take up arms if the horn call is sounded through the speaking tubes cut in the Citadel's rock. These tubes also allow dwarves to flee quickly underground by simply tumbling into them. In a day. Citadel Adbar can arm and armor 9,000 experienced dwarven warriors.

Harbromm's policy is to safeguard the precious dwarven lives of his folk and keep inside the Citadel whatever befalls. No army from the Citadel will ever sally forth to do battle with orcs or to aid other communities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Once again, for crag cat details, see Appendix III of this guidebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>This realm lies under the Great Rift in southern Faerûn in the Shaar. It is mapped and described in FR11 Dwarves Deep.



# The Citadel of Many Arrows

Once the dwarven hold of Felbarr, this fortified city was abandoned when the strength of the dwarves grew feeble, and local mines had all been worked out. The nearby human city of Silverymoon brought its troops to the Citadel with the blessing of the dwarves.

The folk of Silverymoon hoped to use it as a base for exploration of the Coldwood and the needle-sharp Ice Mountains north and east of Dead Orc Pass. There, they hoped to find giant trees for use in shipbuilding, and new sources of gold and the increasingly scarce silver.

Unfortunately, the orcs of the mountains had other ideas. The humans were under attack from their first day in the Citadel. Fifty years later, an orc horde came down from Dead Orc Pass in such numbers that it simply overwhelmed the defenders. One survivor, a wizard who fled by teleport, said that the orcs simply: "[H]urled themselves at the walls. We slew them with arrows....The sky rained arrows, with orcs packed so close together that no shaft could miss. But the time came when all our arrows and spells were gone. By then, there were so many dead orcs that the living ones just piled them up against our walls in a heap. It was so high that they could climb it like a mountain and walk in over our battlements. The end wasn't long in coming, then."

Since that day of slaughter, known as the Battle of Many Arrows, orcs have ruled the city. After much bloodletting, Obould, a giant, bald-headed orc as tall as any two orc warriors, proclaimed himself king. Obould has held his throne largely because he seems immune to any poisons that his rivals can get hold of and also because he has shrewdly entered alliances with some evil human mages and mind flavers of the Underdark. The king is careful to devoutly obey the demands of his shamans so that he can't be accused of turning from the gods to embrace the magic of outsiders.

Life in the overcrowded Citadel is hard. Many orc citizens are little better than starving thieves and beggars. Those who wish to better their lot are given black-bladed scimitars and told to go out and find what they can take. This is a practice that makes caravan travel between Silverymoon and Sundabar perilous indeed.

King Obould prevents widespread uprisings by providing great feasts on holy days in honor of the orc deities. At these celebrations, all can eat and drink. In order for the king to afford this, he needs large amounts of money. The orcs who plunder caravans are often slain and robbed by Obould's guards when they get back home in order to add their treasure to his funds. In response to this practice, the land around the Citadel is now dotted with thousands of tiny orc treasure caches placed by orcs about to return to the Citadel. Most of the rest of the feast money comes from trade with other orc tribes and evil



human merchants in need of weapons and armor. The Citadel produces such goods ceaselessly from metal seized from human and dwarven miners or dug out by slaves working the mines north of the Citadel.

It is death for a nonorc to visit the Citadel, except for a few powerful human and half-orc merchants and mercenaries under the king's prearranged protection. Humans are tormented and then enslaved. Some slaves are put to work in the mines. while others are put to work for the personal pleasure of an orc. The latter sort of slave survives only at the whim of the orc master, and is often tortured. Slaves are always branded, and must be manacled when outside the master's abode. The mining slaves are never fed, and swiftly starve to death or are killed by the hazards of mining. Orc-administered mines never have props holding the ceilings up; slaves simply dig away rock until cave-ins occur. The survivors are then set to digging out the same corridors again.

Halflings, gnomes, and human children are often kept to be tormented for amusement, or for other nefarious purposes. Elves are always interrogated under the lash, and then typically brutally killed. More unusual creatures are often imprisoned in cages for examination to see if they know of treasure or magic that the orcs can seize. More than one captured wizard has used appearance-altering spells to intrigue the orcs into ignoring a death sentence.

Orcs drag those with tales of wilderland treasure caches along with

them to find the treasure. The captive is slain when the treasure is found, so the usual trick of wise captives is to never admit that they have only one treasure cache. Those who speak of treasure hidden in cities are sent there with human mercenary guards and followed by a shadow force of shamans and young orcs who need battle experience. This team lingers near the city to escort the mercenaries back. The orcs of the Citadel have agents and contacts in most of the larger communities of the North (Everlund, Neverwinter, and Silverymoon are the main exceptions).

Merchants who regularly trade with the Citadel usually deal primarily in stolen goods. Nothing is too "hot" to be sold to the orcs of the Citadel, including kidnapped nobles whose ransom doesn't come. One slave is as good as another to an orc

The Citadel has resisted determined attacks from Silverymoon and Sundabar because of the sheer number of orcs it holds. At any time, 1,000 ores guard the Citadel walls, and another 1,000 are on patrol in the lands around. The Citadel can muster another 18,000 if attacked. Additionally, cave holds in the mountains continually generate more orcs hungry for their own place in the Citadel and ready to do battle to get it.

# Deadsnows

This fortified abbey stands on the northernmost slopes of the Nether Mountains, east of Sundabar. Specifically, it lies about halfway between



Sundabar and the Fork. Deadsnows was once the keep of a human lord whose dream of establishing a kingdom here was shattered by relentless orc attacks. It is now home to 450 dwarves dedicated to the veneration of Marthammor Finder-of-Trails. The dwarves dwell in harmony with 30 or so humans who are all priests of Lathander.

The humans serve Lathander in the promotion of growth and new beginnings. To this end, they have a large walled garden and a workshop in which to experiment.

The dwarves worship in a natural cavern beneath a tor that rises at the center of the walled community. In times of trouble, everyone in Deadsnows retreats into this cavern, and the entrances are walled off. The cavern has two secret ways down into the Underdark, but they are guarded by stonefall traps to keep drow and other creatures of the Underdark from ascending into the dwarven halls. The tor is also used as a lookout post.

Deadsnows is named for the battle that finally killed its human lord. It was a winter skirmish that left orc and human bodies strewn over several miles of snow-clad ground. When the thaws came, the area became known as the Field of Wolves, because so many came down to feed that local trappers hired mages to slay them with magic to get their pelts undamaged. The trappers got so many pelts that they paid the wizards

and still made a handsome profit.

In keeping with the dictates of their respective dieties, the folk of Deadsnows make any travelers other than armed orcs and evil beings welcome at an inn called the Rose and Hammer, located in the abbey forecourt. This plain but comfortable place serves good, but bland, food. It has provided many desperate travelers refuge from wolves, winter weather, and orcs. The priests of Lathander will heal visitors in exchange for service, typically time on a fighting patrol scouring the mountain slopes near Deadsnows. Patrols are expected to drive out trolls, orcs, and other predators attracted to the sheep and ponies kept in the two high, fenced meadows of the community.

The abbey has a deep well of clear water that never fails, but the community has little else of interest other than the crowded workshop dedicated to Lathander. This building is crammed with odd pieces of apparatus and failed experiments. Some adventurers have found this a rich source of metal gears, pulleys, levers, wire, and locks, as well as odd bits and pieces that can be turned into weapons or armor.

The walls of Deadsnows are studded with watchtowers and are covered with climbing roses inside and on top. The flowers are tended by the priests of Lathander, and they help to provide cover for defenders looking over the top of the wall.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>The Fork is a ruin located on the trail to Ascore. It is located west and slightly north of Sundabar, and can be found on the maps included with FR5 *The Savage Frontier*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Details of this dwarven deity appear in FR11 Dwarves Deep. Marthammor represents, among other things, dwarves who choose to make a living in cooperation with other races of the surface world.



# lnn

#### The Rose and Hammer



Tended jointly by the human clergy of Lathander ("the Rose") and the dwarves dedicated to Marthammor ("the Hammer"), this inn is clean, but rather bare and cold, with all construction and most furnishings being sculpted stone. The food is good, but simple, and comes from the abbey gardens and what is brought in by the hunters serving the temple. In all, a plain, but serviceable, resting place.

# Jalanthan

This village of just over 200 folk is located on the south bank of the River Rauvin, midway between Everlund and Sundabar. It is often raided by orcs and the evil Blue Bear barbarian tribe, which is allied with Hellgate Keep. Before Turnstone Pass was garrisoned, Jalanthar was subject to frequent raids from the Keep itself. Today, Jalanthar's buildings are little better than ruins. Most are stout stone foundations roofed with turf magically enspelled to resist burning amidst the scrub woodlands.

A small but thriving community of trappers and hunters dwells here. They hunt in the surrounding hills, where most have caves and hidden strongholds that they can retreat to

when orcs or barbarians attack. The hardy, landwise folk of Jalanthar are valued as guides in the Interior, and often hire themselves out for 12 gp per day. A down payment of 50 gp is to be paid in advance and is left with kin in Jalanthar. If anyone cheats, slays, or tricks a guide of Jalanthar, all of the village folk take up the task of avenging the slight. As over two dozen of them are powerful adventurers, this blood bond means something!

Jalanthar has a rough-and-ready combined inn and tavern called the Crowing Cockatrice.

#### Tavern/Inn

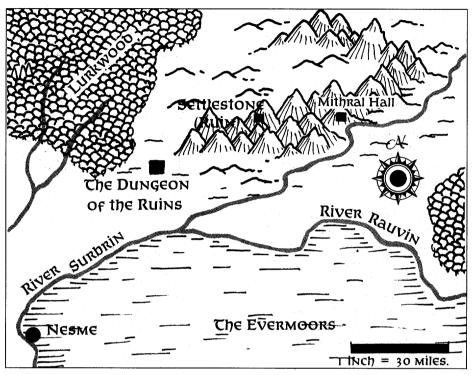
## The Crowing Cockatrice

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A ramshackle fieldstone roadhouse noted more for its enthusiastic staff than polish or cleanliness, the Cockatrice is strategically located on the trade route into the back lands of the Interior, and its many sprawling wings are usually full of guests of all races. The taproom is good, and serves a truly potent local cider (Jalanthar amber, priced at 4 cp/tankard). It's success unfortunately ensures that the Cockatrice is a noisy place to try to get some sleep in, with brawling, shouting, and laughing going on throughout most nights. The name is a fanciful invention, not commemorative of any local monster or event.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>The most powerful and adventuresome folk of Jalanthar are known to include no less than 11 rangers of over 15th level, as well as a heirophant druid, several other priests of greater than 8th level, and at least one 10th-level wizard. There may well be even more powerful citizens. Jalantharren are not given to talking much to outsiders about their achievements or personal business.





# Mithral Hall

The most famous dwarfhold in the northern Sword Coast, Mithral Hall was only recently resettled by the dwarves. For centuries, its rich mithral treasures were only legends. Some dwarves fear it could be swept away again.

Mithral Hall lies underground north and west of the River Surbrin, and east of the vast Lurkwood, within a mountain known as Fourthpeak. The Surbrin flows past the eastern slopes of this mountain. Mithral Hall is a half-day's climb east into the mountains from the ruined dwarven village of Settlestone, whose massive stone build-

ings still provide shelter for explorers and monsters.

One enters Mithral Hall through a secret door from a high valley known as Keeper's Dale. The general location of the door is marked by monoliths. Mithral Hall has a maze-like upper level, designed to divert intruders into traps. The middle level includes mines and smelting furnaces that are vented through long shafts to the height of the peak. The lower level is where the deepest mines descend from a vast cavern called the Undercity. Here, the walls are studded with the cave mouths of homes for 10,000 dwarves. The homes open onto concentric ledges.



The cavern is spanned by a bridge leading east, and eastward passages eventually lead to a huge, natural cavern, over 1,000 feet deep, known as Garumn's Gorge. This cavern is spanned by another bridge, and it forms another excellent defensive barrier for the eastern side of the Hall. The bridges lead eventually to an hidden exit on the eastern slopes of the mountain, overlooking the Surbrin.

Visitors who are invited can meet with Clan Battlehammer in the Halls of Gathering, a vast natural cavern on the upper level. They may also view the most revered clan treasures in the Hall of Dumathoin.

This dwarfhold's mithral lodes are said to be the richest known in the North, and perhaps the richest left anywhere in Faerûn.

Over 175 years ago the proud dwarves of Clan Battlehammer delved too deeply, breaking into a shadowcavern, linked, the tale goes, to the Plane of Shadows. A great shadow dragon, Shimmergloom, entered Mithral Hall from the cavern, ravaged Clan Battlehammer, and took the Hall as his own. He dwelled therein with his entourage of shadow creatures. Duergar of Clan Bukbukken occupied the Hall and worked its mines until the year 1356 DR. That was the year that Bruenor Battlehammer returned to slay Shimmergloom in the company of the drow, Drizzt Do'Urden.

The following year, Bruenor returned with dwarves who shared

his dream of reclaiming Mithral Hall. He drove out the duergar and proclaimed himself the Eighth King of Mithral Hall, Lord of the Peak and Depths.

Today, the dwarves of the Hall are suspicious of uninvited guests. Only those who trade with the dwarves are advised to go there. A watch is kept over ruined Settlestone, whose stout stone buildings still provide shelter to travelers. The dwarves meet with and question anyone who arrives there. <sup>10</sup>

# OLOSTIN'S HOLD

This fortified keep stands on the north side of the Evermoor Way between Yartar and Everlund, due north of the central Lost Peaks. It was once the hold of a human robber baron who raided the nearest Netherese settlements. It stood vacant for years, blasted by the magic that slew Olostin. In that time, it was frequented by orcs and brigands as a temporary base for raiding parties.

About 70 years ago it was occupied by a ranger, Elthond Vvar (now dead). Elthond built the hold into a walled village and a safe haven on the road to Everlund. It remains so today. It's a settlement of 200 that serves as a market and refuge for another 800 or so farmers and cattle ranchers in the land around. These folk are always alert for orc and troll raids, and most are good riders and guides. They are generally fair shots with crossbows, and able to swing a sword with the right end pointed at a foe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Elminster: "If they're orcs, the meeting will be with a volley of crossbow quarrels, followed by an axe charge."



The Hold has little of interest to the traveler, though merchants often stop to sell clothing and trinkets to the shops here. Olostin's Hold has a passable inn and an excellent, welcoming, rustic tayern.

#### Tavern

#### The Flaming Flagon



The taproom of this tavern is lit by a flagon enspelled in a local wizards' duel long ago. It floats high over head, levitating and giving off a constant, dancing, magical flame. The proprietor has hammered burnished copper to the ceiling above it, and the reflected flickering glow gives the taproom a cheery, cozy, warm feeling. The floor is flagstone throughout, and the seats and benches rustic, massive wood. The staff is welcoming and attentive, providing free finger towels, nuts, and breadsticks to accompany vour drinks. There's an alcove with several gaming tables, and a good selection of beer, clarry, fine wine, sherry, and zzar. All in all, a superior drinking spot.

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# The Headless Troll



This resting place is passable, but like all establishments far from competition, a bit overpriced. It is built of wood and painted black inside to hide the scorch marks from when the beheaded troll for which the inn was named was burned here. It apparently fled up and down the hallways, pursued by enthusiastic people with torches, and it did a lot of damage. As a result of the black paint, the place is as dark as the inside of a coal sack. Keep your candle lamp withing reach, even in the daylight hours. Some of the inn's candles were rendered from sheep fat that was old indeed, as as a result the place usually has a faint stink akin to a slaughterhouse.

# Quaervarr

This logging village of 760 human and half-elven folk stands north of Silverymoon, on the edge of the Moonwood. It's known for the huge shadowtop and duskwood trees that provide masts and roof beams for many a ship or hall across the North and down the Sword Coast as far as the eastern reaches of Calimshan. Quaervarr is a quiet, shady place of woodcarvers, carpenters, loggers, and woodland gardeners. The village's food comes from its hunters and from small planted patches in the forest; I have learned enough to particularly recommend the toasted, salted ferns.

Most visitors come here to stay at the Whistling Stag inn and hunting lodge. It's a cozy and luxurious base from which guests can enjoy the best hunting in all the North. The expert lodge guides hunt down owlbears, stirges, and other predators yearround. This helps to keep the boar and deer that roam the southern



Moonwood plentiful. The guides are full of tales about the forest depths.

In the depths of the Moonwood, they say, there is a ruined, overgrown elven castle. Its name is forgotten, but great magic is said to sleep in its gloomy chambers. The castle is very hard to find. Its vine-choked, needlethin spires are lost among the trees, and it bears some sort of cloaking mythal that deters monster intrusions and magical detection alike.

There is also a hill, where drow ladies come on moonlit nights to dance in a great ring. This seems to be done in worship to Eilistraee, a goddess of good aims. It is dangerous to approach the women, the guides say. They hurl potent spells at intruders, chasing those they see for long distances through the forest.

#### INN

# The Whistling Stag

This cozy, even luxurious, timberand-thatch lodge is crammed with
stag's heads (some are even deliberately mounted as towel racks!),
bearskin rugs, and other hunting trophies. The dining room has a magnificent tapestry depicting an elven
hunt. It is enchanted, and shows two
hunting bands in fantastic armor and
finery galloping hard through the forest after a boar, the riders leaping
their mounts over fallen trees and the
like. These two groups take turns riding through the scene over and over,
with birds flitting in and out of the

trees between their appearances.

After watching it all evening, I thought it was all rather hard on the poor boar!

The Stag is named for a famous local animal, never caught, that used to elude the best huntsmen and then saunter down the village streets the next morning. Folk who were out drawing water used to swear he looked at them in amusement, and whistled as he went. Regardless of the truth of this tale, I urge the traveler in the vicinity to stop and stay here, despite the cost (which at 14 gp per person/night, stabling included, but with all drinks extra, is geared to nobles and the wealthy interested in hunting). This is as good as inns get, with attentive personal service, such as warmed robes brought to you when you rise, warm baths whenever desired, a resident healer, and more. A hidden delight.

# Places in Delimbiyn Vale Hellgatekeep

Hellgate Keep stands on the westernmost of the three rivers that join to form the Delimbiyr. The westernmost stream was once known as the Ascal Stream, but it's now called Skull Creek. This infamous city is the Maw of the Nine Hells, the most evil and dangerous place in all the North. For obvious reasons I could not go near it.

It was once known as Ascalhorn, because it was built on the slopes of a



jutting natural peak known as Ascal's Horn. The Keep's soaring stone walls and towers were built by elves long ago. They were intended to guard Turnstone Pass and the northern reaches of the elves' realm from the periodic attacks of orc hordes.

The elves who built it made one mistake. They didn't want the distasteful task of fighting the orcs themselves, so they turned their newly built fortress over to human refugees from fallen Netheril.

The humans of Ascalhorn were proud, and strong in magic. They strove to recapture the glory of fallen Myth Drannor, even as Silverymoon does today. However, they overreached themselves. One ambitious mage, Wulgreth, created a secret gate to the Nine Hells in order to summon aid for his strivings against rivals in the city. Baatezu slowly infiltrated the city, at first only as quiet, quick servitors wearing shapes as like people as possible. Then they grew bolder, scheming and manipulating, acting as go-betweens for the powerful mages of the city, encouraging rivalries, misunderstandings, and fears.11 They led many of Ascalhorn's powerful wizards to embrace lichdom in a way that gave the baatezu magical control over them.

When they felt bold enough, baatezu ruled openly, torturing and devouring the human citizens at will. In desperation, many women and men of Ascalhorn turned to dusty grimoires. They summoned tanar'ri to fight the baatezu. It was a strategy that worked too well.

A horde of tanar'ri poured into the city, slaughtering humans, liches, and baatezu alike. Those who could fled in terror, and frightened folk across the North rechristened Ascalhorn with the name *Hellgate Keep* from a minstrel's ballad describing the fall of its pride and might.

Today, Hellgate Keep is a fortress ruled uneasily by a council of rival marilith tanar'ri. Each commands a faction struggling for control over the others. Grintharke, a balor tanar'ri who ruled the Keep for centuries, was recently destroyed by elven adventurers. This threw the forces of the Keep into internal chaos, delaying its planned conquest of the North. Hellgate Keep forces had expected to begin with Sundabar, and then go to Silverymoon, Everlund, and so on, proceeding thereafter down the Delimbiyr until Waterdeep was isolated and could be defeated.

All types of tanar'ri, from nalfeshnee to rutterkin, can be found in the Keep today. Some servant liches and annis (hags) also dwell there, as do legions of cambion troops led by a death knight, Shari Nikkoleth.<sup>12</sup>

Under the commands of the council of mariliths, the death knight leads or directs many patrols down the Delimbiyr and through the Nether Mountains to imperil the roads around Sundabar. The elves and tre-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Elminster says that the reader should substitute the word "paranoia" for "fears."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>The various types of baatezu and tanar'ri (including cambions) are described in MC8 *The Outer Planes Appendix.* The annis is detailed in MC2, under "Hag." The death knight appears in MC4.



ants who remain in the High Forest nearby make short work of any patrols who head into the woods. The death knight, faced with firm orders to continue such strikes, uses such duty as punishment, knowing he's throwing forces away.

Troops from Citadel Adbar, Everlund, Silverymoon and Sundabar together hold Turnstone Pass. Here they prevent Hellgate Keep from overrunning all the cities of the North.

Several powerful mages<sup>13</sup> have combined to raise temporary mythal-like magical fields over the Keep. These fields are fueled by magical nodes of power installed long ago by the elves. The magic makes the tanar'ri unable to bring others of their kind from the Abyss into Faerûn. The nodes of power can't be destroyed without bringing portions of the Keep crashing down on the heads of the resident tanar'ri, so the spells have hampered the growth of Hellgate Keep. The Harpers have worked hard to sow rumors all across Faerûn, so many adventuring bands have heard that the best way to build a reputation is to destroy the tanar'ri patrols of Hellgate Keep. Harpers have even been known to equip such bands with healing potions and horns to blow to call a rescue attempt from a Harper band.

The tanar'ri may be hampered in their plans for ruling the entire North, but their cruel rule is firm over Hellgate Keep itself. There they breed and herd captured humans, keeping them for torment and as house slaves. Those who become disobedient are transformed into ghouls and set free to roam the North, spreading fear and destruction. This practice has led to Hellgate Keep being called "the ghoul-hold."

Merchants and travelers alike now shun the Delimbiyr headwaters. Game is growing more plentiful, since the tanar'ri only delight in hunting intelligent game, such as humans. The only folk who head for Hellgate Keep today are fools, halfwits, or slavers, However, slaving is a dangerous trade with Hellgate Keep. The slavers are just as likely to wind up in cruel captivity as the slaves they bring. So beware Hellgate Keep, and keep clear, as I did.

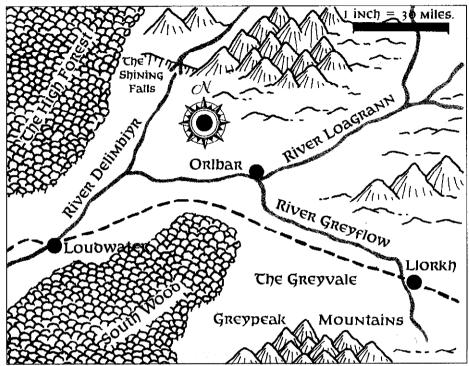
# LLorkh

I'm unable to report on this town personally. When I arrived at the local tavern, a place called the Ten Bells, I was accosted by four ruffians who may have been local Zhentarim agents. If I hadn't had some spells ready and been wearing my rings, this guidebook would never have been finished. As it was, I was forced to ride out hastily, leaving bodies smoldering in the street behind me. I haven't dared return since. So, I can only present you with information that I've been able to glean from secondary sources.

Llorkh was once an important mining town of 2,000 humans and 300 dwarves. All were busily occupied in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Elminster: "Hmmph-note ye how he avoids mentioning Khelben, Laeral, the Simbul, Vangerdahast, and me?"





subsistence farming and in taking iron and silver from shallow mines in the mountains to the north and east. Those lodes were soon worked out, and Llorkh began to shrink. Eventually, the only people who would have remained would have been a few diehard miners and a lot of sheep farmers.

Then the Zhentarim quietly arrived. They sought a western base for their planned desert caravan route. They slew the local lord, Phintarn "Redblade," and installed their own man, the mage Geildarr Ithym, 14 in the Lord's Keep.

To support him, over 400 purple-cloaked "Lord's Men" appeared. They fought several small battles with the town militia, slaughtering them all under the pretext that they were "lawless, armed troublemakers." This did not win Geildarr any friends among the townsfolk, and the dwarves began quietly to leave.

Then Zhentarim caravans began to arrive, needing accommodation, fresh beasts, food and watering, and wagon repairs, and so on. Townsfolk were pressed into this work, and several new but rather ugly inns and taverns were hastily thrown up. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Geildarr Ithym is an ambitious young Zhentarim mage, an LE hm W8 (WIS 7; INT 17, CHA 16). He dreams of one day rising to head the Zhentarim, just as so many other magelings of the Brotherhood do. His Lord's Men are LE hm F1s to F4s, all of them loyal Zhentilar.



old Ten Bells was joined by the Drover's Cup and the Wet Wizard (Geildarr has never been sure if this was a dig at him). I suspect they're rather poor taverns.

The only inn in Llorkh was a small place run by Phintarn's brother. Mysteriously, he died the night before his inn, the Worried Wyvern, caught fire and burned to the ground. Within a month, two new, barnlike, three-story inns had opened. These are Tantarn's Inn and the Six Shields. The former is rumored to be quite pleasant. Tantarn is a veteran innkeeper from Iriaebor, who fell on hard times during the recent Zhent troubles there. The Six Shields is little better than a Zhentilar barracks, full of muddy boots, pipe smoke, and rough fighters sharpening rougher swords. Since the opening of Mithral Hall, almost all of the dwarves have quietly disappeared from Llorkh. Presumably, they seek better lives under the rule of King Bruenor. At least three of the mines have been taken over as storage tunnels by the Zhen—oops, Lord's Men. Monsters are said to have established lairs in some of the other tunnels, so the traveler hoping to use them for shelter had best beware.

The increased security in Llorkh (which I ran afoul of) is said to be due to Zhentil Keep's fears that Hellgate Keep will send shapechanged tanar'ri to infiltrate and destroy this stronghold before it can be fortified and made strong.

The Zhents are rushing to strengthen their might here. In all but the worst months of winter, at least two caravans a week come in from the Darkhold area. Each one brings more weapons and Zhentilar warriors to wield them, as well as trade goods.

Work has begun on a ditch around the town, and I suspect that fortifications are not far off. Zhentilar warriors are permanently encamped east and south of the town proper, and Lord Geildarr is busily hiring adventurers to scout deep into the mountains to the east. He keeps them searching for lost magic from Netheril to bolster his forces, or so the tavern talk in Loudwater goes. The Zhentilar troops have wrought two other large changes in town thus far: There's a lot more money in Llorkh, and there's now a bustling temple to Cyric called the Dark Sun. 15

# Onlban

This village of 450 shepherds stands in Delimbiyr Vale on the north bank of the confluence of the Loagrann and the Greyflow. For those unfamiliar with the area, the Greyflow is the river that runs past Llorkh and flows into the Delimbiyr between the Shining Falls and Loudwater. The Loagrann is the river whose three tributaries rise in the northern Greypeak Mountains. It flows southwest to join the Greyflow about halfway between Llorkh and the Delimbiyr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>This temple's high priest is Mythkar Leng (formerly a priest of Bane), who is an LE hm P12 of Cyric.



Orlbar has absolutely nothing to recommend it to the traveler except that it's a place where one can buy Spartan food and shelter. It has a drafty, bare, warehouse-like shrine shared by many faiths where travelers can sleep on the floor. There are rumors of old, overgrown, Netherese castles and villas in the wooded mountain slopes north of the city, and adventurers sometimes come here seeking them.

# Zelbross

This hamlet is home to about 120 folk, mostly quiet farmers. It is found on the road between Secomber and Loudwater, about midway between the two. At this point, the River Shining has rich natural clay pits along its banks. This may even be the reason the very old settlement was established. A dozen or so elderly craftsfolk in Zelbross make pottery of all sorts. Their work is excellent, and passing merchants and peddlers snap up all they can produce.

Zelbross is also famous as a source of clay smoking pipes, baked iron-hard with a mottled, tortoise-shell finish. They are sold for 5 sp each, or 1 gp each in Waterdeep, where all the nobles who smoke have at least one. These pipes can be found across Faerûn.

Zelbross has a pleasant but forgettable inn with the curious name of the Last Place. There is also a rustic tavern, the Sly Fox.

#### Tavern

## The Sly Fox



The Fox is the sort of tavern I like to call average rustic. It has a lowbeamed, smoky taproom with a hearth always surrounded by elders toasting their toes and nursing tankards while they try to keep their pipes lit. They ignore visitors, who will find the beer good, but the wine simply awful. The only other drink available is cider. Thankfully, all of these beverages come in tankards, which are 2 cp each. Once you're over the shock of getting wine in a tankard, reflect that it holds much more than a tallglass. Now if they'll just work on getting some wine that I don't want to spit out as soon as it touches my tongue.

#### ININI

#### The Last Place



The origin of this old, crumbling establishment's name has been lost over time; perhaps it was once the last inn on a particular route. Try to get either of the north bedchambers. They have the nicest views of the High Forest, and the most shelter from road noise during the night. The inn keeps its own pigeons, and makes nice pigeon pie, but the rest of the fare is very ordinary indeed.



# Appendix I: Folk of the North



eople listed here are by no means the only important people of the North, though they are folk likely to prove use-

ful to travelers as sources of local knowledge, influence, and power. With Elminster's aid, I, Ed of the, Greenwood, have assembled here a list of probable classes, levels, and alignments for these individuals, using the standard Realms abbreviations. Many of these statistics have been updated, and so they take precedence over any previously published stats. Note that only ability scores of 16 or greater are listed.

People appear here alphabetically by first name, because many of them lack surnames. Nicknames and titles aren't used in alphabetization. For example, Mother Gothal appears under "G."

ALASTRA HATHWINTER, "THE NIGHT CLOAK" (CG hf W.21; DEX 17, INT 18, WIS 17, CHA 16). Alastra is the proprietress of a festhall and rooming house in Longsaddle that bears her nickname. She was the intimate companion of old Auglyth Harpell, a man many years her senior. Since his death some 12 winters ago, she has remained in the village and run her business. The Night Cloak has a steady stream of customers. Merchants come to stay with their favorite escorts for a night, and adventurers come to stay for a week or more while exploring the ruins and rumored lost dwarven delves of the Dessarin. Many Harpells also slip into the Cloak to see "Aunt Alastra," and to talk over their individual problems and plans. Alastra wears a ring of

regeneration and a ring of spell turning. The only other magical item she's known to possess is an undergirdle of feather falling. (At this, Elminster coughed delicately, and declined to reply to teasing about the extent of his knowledge.) Alastra's spells tend to be unusual and powerful. She is rumored to be a Harper or at least a Harper ally. Her adventuring career took her from Nimbral to Malatra (in Kara-Tur), and from Zakhara in the distant South to the castles of the giants of the clouds above the endless ice of the North. Alastra is content to stay in one place now, but her knowledge of the furthest reaches of Toril surpasses that of most in the North. She is known to have been apprenticed to both Elminster and Khelben Arunsun at various times in her career. She even spent some time learning from a wizard of Halruaa before she left that secretive land.

"RED" ARUPH THUNDERFIST (CN hm F9; STR 17, INT 17, CON 18, CHA 16). This red-haired, burly Luskanite looks like he could punch a hole in a stone wall. Red can often be found in a corner booth in the Cutlass, where he does business on a daily basis. He operates as a fence for stolen goods, a ship cargo arranger, or a barter master for scarce gear or unusual payments. He also acts as a contact for crew hire-ons. He's a cheerfully grunting, snarling, or growling man who drinks copious amounts of spirits and seems immune to poison or the effects of drink. Red is liked and respected all over Luskan. For a gold piece, he'll arrange a contact, and he never betrays a trust. Those who owe him money can sometimes pay by doing him a service.

Red is responsible for the defensive training of the lady escorts at the Cutlass. He's been known to leap to their defense by swarming up a climbing shaft with *three* swords in his hands. He is also known to have several powerful magical items on his person at all times.

BAERLATHA LURUIN (CG hf W9; INT 18, CHA 16). Baerlatha is the wife of the healer Chanczlatha Luruin of Bargewright Inn. She spends her time concocting potions, mothering a large family of adopted children, and tending sick animals in Chanczlatha's paddock. She's a slim,



soft-spoken woman with steel-gray eyes and ash-blond hair. Baerlatha is an accomplished dancer and a capable mage, though she says little about her mastery of magic. She can be hired to cast spells for fees because the family is always short of money. Typically, she charges 1,000 gp per spell for 3rd-level or weaker spells, and 2,000 gp per spell for more powerful magic. Baerlatha will not go adventuring anymore, though. The farthest she'll go from Bargewright Inn to cast a spell is still within sight of its walls.

BELDABAR YARRYN (LN hmF9; STR16, WIS16, CON 16, CHA 16). Beldabar is the owner and innkeeper of Beldabar's Rest, an underground inn in Yartar. Beldabar once led an adventuring band called the Hawks of the North. This fellowship was shattered when the Hawks recklessly decided to raid Hellgate Keep. Only three of the 16 members survived, and all three came to Yartar to run the inn together. The other two eventually returned to adventuring, and were hunted down and slain by suspected agents of Hellgate Keep.

Only Beldabar remains, guarded by magical items that he always wears. Exactly what magic protects him is a secret. Beldabar is always armed with two swords and a throwing axe. He's ready for trouble, and is known to carry an iron hom of Valhalla and two iron bands of Bilarro spheres at his belt. Beldabar is burly, easy-going, and good-looking. He has a natural, intermittent mind power, usable at will. DMs using psionics in a campaign should revise this into a psionic wild talent. In any round, on a 3 or less on 1d8, Beldabar can use ESP on any beings within 10 feet of him.

BELLEETHE KHELDORNA (LG hf Pal7 of Tyr; STR 16,INT 17, WIS17,CON16,CHA17). Belleeme was recently elected as the Waterbaron (ruler for life) of Yartar. She is dedicated to justice and fairness. This gives her a full-time job handling the customary deceit in the trading town where she dwells and policing happy-go-lucky worshippers of Tymora coming to the local temple. She also works at discovering and eliminating the agents of the evil Kraken Society, which her predecessor headed, as well as finding the well-hidden Zhentarim, Dragon Cult and Thayan agents in town.

Belleethe is stern, quick-witted, and a very good judge of character. She owns a *hat of disguise* and uses it to roam Yartar, observing so as to best direct her Shields where to strike the next day.

Belleethe was trained and schooled in Neverwinter, and then learned some things from Piergeiron of Waterdeep. She was the candi-



Belleethe Kheldorna, Waterbaron of Yartar

date put forward by the Lords' Alliance as the person they wanted to see ruling Yartar. If she can survive, she may do very well. Her fairness has impressed nearby Uthgardt barbarian tribes, and they're taking a second look at civilized folk because of her.

BRIIATHOR ALOUGARR (LN hmF3; STR 16, INT17, WIS 17). Briiathor is the current Lord Warder of Amphail (the local ruler, under the command of Piergeiron of Waterdeep). Briiathor is a man who speaks quietly and seldomly, but his level, gray eyes see much. He's a trim-bearded man who dislikes armor and ceremony. He makes a practice of wandering Amphail on foot at all hours, moving as silently as possible. Briiathor is a member of Waterdeep's city guard, though officially he has retired to take up the post of Lord Warder. He knows the intrigues and protocols of power in the City of Splendors, and has memorized every room and passage in Castle Waterdeep.

Briiathor is a former adventuring comrade of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun; they rode together as part of the Wheel of Blades adventuring company some 30 winters ago.



Briiathor enjoys Khelben's trust. He has hidden people and items for Khelben from time to time, For example, he once helped hide an adventurer named Laeral during her cure from the evil tyranny of the magical crown that wrecked the adventuring fellowship of the Nine. Briiathor is unshakeably loyal to Piergeiron. If *charmed* into doing anything deceitful or treacherous towards Waterdeep or any of its Lords, Briiathor will instantly break out of the *charm* in a cold fury.

CHANCZLATHA LURUIN (NG hm P11 of Lathander). Chanczlatha is a locally revered animal healer and physic (a doctor given to using herbs and medicinal broths). His life is devoted to healing and tending the sick. He is a quiet, stammering, unassuming man with gentle hands and a secret delight in bawdy songs and jokes. Chanczlatha is often called on to heal those who've fallen afoul of danger and been brought to him. The faithful of Lathander are always healed for free, but Chanczlatha charges fees for all other spellcasting. This helps him cover the heavy costs of his medicines and of feeding the animals he keens. He often keeps alive beasts that others would leave to die. Like his wife Baerlatha, Chanczlatha never leaves Bargewright Inn.

DELGARA "THE SLIM" DAUNTSWORD (CN hf dual class: F14, formerly T4 and NE alignment; STR 16, WIS 16). Delgara is the monstrously fat proprietor of the Stag at Rest, a tavern in Kheldell. This gray-haired, puffing, tottering woman was once a pirate of some infamy on the Sword Coast. She captained a boat called the Witch of the Waves, and loved to lead her crew onto the decks of other ships while waving a meat cleaver.

On one such visit, she cut down the favorite son of Baram, a High Captain of Luskan. When all the warships of that city set out after her vessel, she thought it best to dive over the side near Port Llast and swim ashore. Her ship and crew were destroyed by the vengeful ships of Luskan soon after.

Delgara had cached a large amount of treasure over her years as a pirate. Most of it is now in Neverwinter, or invested in properties in Waterdeep's Sea Ward and North Ward. She lives on the proceeds of her investments, instructing her agents in Waterdeep to send her up a strongchest of supplies whenever she needs some. Delgara is never without a ring of spell turning, a periapt of proof against poison, and a dagger +4 on her person (the sheathed weapon is hidden in her capacious bosom). She may well have other magic and wealth hidden in her tavern.

DLARA (LN hf W7; STR 17). The second-in-command of Mother Gothal's festhall in Amphail, this eight-foot-tall, dusky-skinned warrior from Chult seldom speaks. She enjoys watching and participating in tumbling and acrobatics, and has a delightful sense of humor. She is very popular among the young noblemen of Water-deep for her willingness to wrestle with them. She does this on stage at the festhall, with both combatants wearing little more than a lot of oil. She can easily pick up and throw an average human male across a room.

ESKLINDRAR (LN hmW6: Sage; INT 18,WIS 18, CHA 16). Esklindrar is a sage whose knowledge of human writings in the Sword Coast area is unequaled outside of Candlekeep. Several potent protective magics have been laid on him by his friend, Alustriel of Silverymoon, who wishes to preserve his lore. As a result, Esklindrar can erect a spherical wall of force around himself at will, can neutralize poison twice a day, and can cause a single blade barrier spell to erupt from any book he has ever handled, regardless of its present location. He can also reflect all enchantment and charm spells and spell-like effects (including psionics) back 100% at their sources.

He's apt to be sharp-tongued, but he is a keen student of knowledge with an awesome memory. Esklindrar lives to acquire knowledge. He has befriended several groups of adventurers who go off to follow up leads he has given them. If any harm befalls him, the Harpers and one or more of the adventuring bands will seek revenge.

FAURAEL BLACKHAMMER (NG hmF8; STR 17, INT 16). The long-time lord protector of Triboar, this aging warrior has been elected every winter to the post of militia commander and ruler of the northern town where he lives. He's gruff and short-tempered due to the constant pain of his old wounds, but he's also a master strategist and a good teacher. Under his leadership and directives, the militia of Triboar has grown to match many armies in competence, if not in size.

Faurael wants to die in battle knowing he's won a victory, but he doesn't want the fray to be anywhere near his beloved Triboar. He's working to influence the Lords' Alliance and every mage and priest he can find to try to use magic on the orcs after their next horde comes south. He wants to smash their far northern communities in the mountains, breaking their strength so that orc hordes will become a thing of the past. Faurael hopes that this will allow the North to grow strong and populous.



His end is coming, and the gray-haired warrior knows it. He's growing impatient with others' lack of strong commitment to his views on orcs, and is willing to hire adventurers to go on expeditions to the orc holds for him. He wants the adventurers to wreak all the havoc they can.

GHALIVER LONGSTOCKING (CN halfm F5/T5; STR 16, DEX17, CON18, CHA16). This charming manipulator of merchants always has a dozen schemes and moneymaking dodges on the go at any one time. He is a shrewd judge of folk. Ghaliver is so successful at his scheming that he now owns a farmers' market, a stockyard, a walled grain warehouse complex, and an inn in Westbridge, as well as a few houses in Waterdeep whose whereabouts he keeps secret. He has quite a bit of treasure hidden around these in the bottom levels of bricked-up chimneys. The hiding places are accessed by raking out the fire and lifting the hearthstones. His money is kept in sacks with sewn-on rope loops, so that the sacks can be snared from above by use of a pole-hook.

Ghaliver has managed to buy a ring of protection +2 and an iron bands of Bilarro sphere. He usually keeps both with him. He also has several other useful magical items that are hidden in Westbridge. He is seldom without a bodyguard or aide within easy reach, and makes a practice of befriending adventurers so he can call on them for favors, such as hassling competitors or guarding quick cash shipments to and from Waterdeep. He pays well for these sort of services.

Ghaliver dreams of becoming a real power in the North, but he knows that he's only just becoming powerful enough to come to the notice of the Zhentarim and other groups who will wish him very ill indeed. Currently, he's trying to think of a way to protect himself in the years ahead.

GHELKYN STORMWIND (CG hmW7; INT 18). Ghelkyn is a hard-working, soft-spoken wizard who spends his days with the loggers of Kheldell. He's a man who has turned his back on adventuring and on the intrigues and ambitions of the cities. He was once a former apprentice of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. Today, Ghelkyn is a stout man who spends his evenings studying and experimenting with magic. None of his spells look or sound quite the same as the standard versions. He always carries his most prized spell, a wizard version of the priest spell cure serious wounds. His version acts by stealing vital energy directly from a foe. (For details on this spell, see Appendix III, "Ghelkyn's Wounding.")



Ghaliver Longstocking

GONDYL LITHEEUM (N doppleganger; see Volume 2 of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®). The snobbish, urbane and slim human male proprietor of Everwyvern House in Triboar keeps his true nature secret to avoid being slain by outraged humans. He always moves at a slow, leisurely pace, with his languid speech and manners. He preys only seldomly, and only on lone guests who can't pay or whom he thinks will vanish unnoticed. He wears a ring of magic missiles taken from a victim, which he keeps hidden by letting the flesh of his fingers grow over it. Gondyl plans to infiltrate Triboar with more of his own kind and dreams of someday ruling the entire town. As things stand, he feels safe. If Triboar is ever overrun by orcs or trolls, he'll simply adopt their shape and avoid the slaughter. Gondyl has amassed a huge amount of gold, which he has hidden under the inn. It's in a trap-filled chamber off of the cesspit. All of the belongings left behind by his victims are hidden there too.

"MOTHER" GOTHAL (NG hf T10 [retired]; DEX 16, CHA 16). Mother Gothal is the elderly proprietress of her own festhall in Amphail. She was once a dancer of striking beauty who was





Inther Blackfeather's Rakshasa

famous in Baldur's Gate. She stole enough from local merchants to invest wisely and grow rich so she could retire to a life of ease in Waterdeep.

She found that some of her neighbors were secret slavers, and hired an adventuring band to free the slaves in a dramatic battle. The aftermath left her on the receiving end of a vendetta from the Oloskar family, so she fled across Faerûn with their knives very close at her back.

It was over a decade before all of that family were dead. Gothal killed most of them herself. defeating them one at a time as they tried to kill her. By that time, only one of the former slaves, Dlara, was still alive, so Gothal brought her to Amphail.

After the bustle of Waterdeep and the excitement of being on the run for so long, Gothal found life rather lonely. Her money was running low, so she decided to start a festhall. This surrounded her with the energy and excitement of folk on the move. Mother Gothal delights in hearing people's dreams and schemes, and many folk come to the festhall just to talk with her. Her sage advice has set many a young Waterdhavian on the road to destiny.

GUNDAR BRONTOSKIN (LN hm F11; STR 17, WIS 17, CHA 16). Gundar is the king of the Uthgardt Thunderbeast tribe and the ruler of Grunwald. He's a heavy-set, handsome man who is never without a broadsword, a handaxe, and various hidden daggers.

Gundar is the wise and tolerant leader of the most civilized Uthgardt tribe. He has traveled the Sword Coast lands and is a polite listener. He is a fair man and a good judge of character. His recall of slights and misdeeds carries clear

down the years.

Gundar's people worship him, and even rival Uthgardt tribes respect him. Gundar can call the barbarians together in a battle horde at any time; they will hurry to his summons in a matter of days. He makes friends quickly, but is a bad enemy to have. In battle he is as cold as stone, always thinking and planning, and never giving in to rage or recklessness.

HELDER MORNSTONE (NG hmR9; STR 17, WIS 17, CON 17). Heldar is the 60-year-old protector of Xantharl's Keep (the leader of its garrison and tutor of its militia). He dreams of seeing the Keep expand into a bustling farming and craftworking town before he dies. He envisions a settlement divided by wooded parks sacred to Mielikki. He knows this will almost certainly never come about, but is content to try to defend the Keep while he still has the strength.

Helder does not look kindly on troublemakers, but knows that visiting adventurers can be his best allies against persistent foes. Thus, he always directs adventuring bands to known troll lairs and undead-infested ruins near the Keep. He's sure that both the Zhentarim and the Cult of the Dragon have agents in Xantharl's Keep, and he's determined to discover just who they are.

INTHER BLACKFFEATHER (NE hmT13; DEX18,INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 16). The sinister, cinnamonskinned Inther is almost always found in his curtained booth in Luskan's Cutlass tavern. His cat-like, yellow eyes flash in the gloom, and his softly menacing voice is only a mutter beyond the booth. He enters and leaves by a secret shaft linking the booth to the cellars. Inther is a fence for stolen goods and the largest slave trader north of Amn. He does very well fronting for a dozen or more slavers who operate out of Luskan and reach as far south as Kelazzan and Esbresh near the Utter East.

Inther has several magical rings and wands. He is also protected by mysterious magic that enables him to trade places, via a simultaneous teleport, with a rakshasa. The rakshasa has a beautiful, human-like female head and



torso, with leonine limbs and a scorpion-like (though nonvenomous) bone-sting tail (INT 12; Unique individual; AL LE; AC -4; MV 15; HD 7; THAC0 13; #ATT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-4 (claw/claw/tail sting); SA Illusion; SD +1 or better weapon to hit and any weapon below +3 inflicts half damage; MR Special; SZ M (6' tall); ML 16; XP 3,000). She loves battle and pitches into whatever danger Inther brings her into with gusto, slaughtering until no foes face her. Inther's past and the whereabouts of his abode are unknown.

JALBOUN OF THE TWO BLADES (CE hm F8; STR 18/77, INT 16, WIS 17, CON 18, CHA 17). This brawling, lusty fence and mercenary works his dual trade from Luskan's Cutlass. He often roars out drinking songs and joins in the fights that break out in the taproom with joy. He particularly likes hurling people down stairs, through tables, and out the door to land in the street outside. Jalboun customarily fights with two scimitars that are both swords of dancing, and he is also an expert at hurling axes, daggers, and tavern tables.

KRALGAR BONESNAPPER (CN hm F12; STR 16, WIS 17, CHA 18). Chief of the Uthgardt Griffon tribe, Kralgar rules Griffon's Nest in the northern Dessarin. He works tirelessly toward his goal, which is to conquer and rule one of the great cities of the North. His warriors and hired agents are of all sorts. They include orcs hungry for plunder, civilized wizards who hold personal grudges against certain city-dwellers, and agents of distant empires seeking to sow strife in the region for their own purposes.

Kralgar would be happiest enthroned in Silverymoon, but he would be pleased to rule Everlund if it were larger and more fortified. He would even settle for Neverwinter, Mirabar, or Sundabar. Kralgar has declared ritual war on all cities. If he remains frustrated for long, he will be forced to begin eradicating smaller settlements and holds to draw the armies of the cities out into the open. There, he is confident that he can overwhelm them.

Kralgar doesn't really believe that magic can be powerful enough to overcome groups of determined Griffon warriors, but just in case, he's interested in acquiring as many enchanted items for his own personal use as possible. He has already amassed a small heap of magical items and carries the more useful ones at all

KRIVVIN SHAMBLESTAR (NG hm F8; STR 16, DEX 17). Krivvin is the tavernmaster of the Stag-Horned Flagon in Amphail. The stocky, silverhaired, soft-spoken man has seen 67 winters,

and tends to be economical in his movements. Krivvin has an excellent memory for faces and the favored drinks that go with them. He also has a far keener ear than most think he does. He knows most of the business of those who drink in his bar, whether they realize it or not. Because of this, he serves as a watchman for both the Harpers and the Lords of Waterdeep. (Mirt the Moneylender is a regular visitor and old friend).

Krivvin is an expert knife thrower, and always wears a ring of spell turning and a ring of spell storing. The latter ring holds the priest spells blade barrier, dispel magic, heal, and hold person.

NISTLOR "THE UNDYING" LOTHLYN (CN hm W10; INT 18, CHA 16). Nistlor is the smooth-spoken, immaculate, goateed proprietor of the House of the Wise Unicorn in Nesmé. He's a mage who is turning to necromancy and working quietly toward his own lichdom. He has already mastered the art of creating several lesser undead types and keeping himself youthful through magic. Now, he is carefully collecting potions of longevity. He has three apprentices and prefers to use them, as well as hired adventurers, to gain spell components and accomplish tasks for him. He is also hiring spies to seek out the true strengths and layout of Mithral Hall, in case he needs much wealth in the years ahead. He may yet slip wholly into evil ways.

OPHALA CHELDARSTORN (NG hf W14; DEX 17, INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 17). Ophala is the covert owner and resident of the Moonstone Mask in Neverwinter. She is an important, respected member of the Many-Starred Cloak. She regards the Harpers and Elminster of Shadowdale as her friends, and the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan as her deadly foe. Her apprentices spend most of their time magically spying on the Brotherhood so that its spies and agents can be intercepted and thwarted. Ophala had a brief but perilous career adventuring on other planes, but she has returned to stay. She worships Mystra attentively, and the goddess has an eve on her for elevation to the ranks of the Chosen, though Ophala doesn't suspect this. Through her staff, Ophala learns much of what goes on in the North, though she seldom reveals that she's learned it. She dreams of a peaceful North, ruled by magic turned to good ends.

PHELANSHEENE (CG hf W14; INT 18, WIS 17, CHA 16). Phelansheene is a sorceress under a curse. She's fully present in Faerûn only on nights when the moon is full. She's tied to Amphail by a link to her spell books, which contain ancient



and powerful Netherese spells. The curse was laid on Phelansheene by a Red Wizard of Thay whom Phelansheene has since trapped in a crystal ball hidden in Amphail.

Phelansheene is in love with Thorn Tlassalune, a rogue who owns the Stone Stallion inn in Amphail. She seeks to win her freedom from the curse and return to Faerûn, and to that end she has accumulated a lot of magic seized from wizards of Faerûn when the moon is full. The other plane she is condemned to is a place of mists that may be part of Limbo or may be closely linked to the demiplane of Ravenloft.

RULDORN THE STORM RANGER (CG hm R13; STR 17, DEX 16, INT 16,WIS 16,CON 17,CHA 16). Ruldorn is a guide and defender of Everlund nicknamed for his unerring ability to find his way in even the worst winter snowstorms. He's a gaunt giant of a man, standing almost seven feet tall, but weighing only a little more than 220 pounds. He is a Harper, and a long-time community leader in Everlund. His home or lair is hidden somewhere west of the city, but he can usually be found at the Battered Hat, an inn in Everlund where guides tend to gather when not on the trail.

SKULNER WAINWRIGHT (LN hmF3;STR 16, DEX 17, INT 18, WIS 18). Skulner is the most famous wagonmaker in all the North. He's a design genius who lives in Triboar, spending his life crafting new wagons and trying out design ideas in his workshops. He is wealthy and content, and dreams of some day crafting a wagon that flies. He wants to come up with it himself, not just buy or seize one of the skyships of Halruaa or Evermeet, or use the magic he's heard of in use in Nimbral. One day he'd like to tour Lantan and sit down to chat about designs with Lantanna artificers. For now, though, there's hardly time enough to do the work lined up in front of him, and every day folk come clamoring to him for more wagons.

TABRA (NG hf W22; DEX 18, INT 18,WIS 18,CHA 16). Tabra is the proprietress of a rooming house and festhall named after her in Bargewright Inn. She was once an apprentice of Ioulaum, one of the few Netherese sorcererkings not to perish in the fall of Netheril or flee to Halruaa. Ioulaum was ultimately slain in a spell battle with a cabal of a dozen alhoon (illithiliches), but by then he'd perfected his greatest spell: *Ioulaum's longevity*.

Tabra cast the spell on herself, and then destroyed all records of it. She had no wish for it to fall into the hands of evil mages, because its casting requires the death of one mage for each year of life the caster desires to attain. Tabra exterminated a colony of mind flayers over 2,000 strong that had been about to sacrifice her to some sort of dark god. So far, she has only used about half the time her magic bought her. She has no plans to recreate the spell to further prolong her own life.

Over the years, Tabra's alignment has changed from chaotic neutral to neutral good, and she has used her magic more and more seldom. The spell has kept her looking like a petite, impish, blond, teen-aged girl, except for her dark expressive eyes, which betray the weight of her years. Tabra spends her life making people around her happy, and often uses magic, private chats, and gifts of money or service behind the scenes to aid those she meets. She is a valued ally of the Harpers, but refuses to become a member. She has kept herself aloof from powerful mages such as Elminster and Khelben. The Simbul and Laeral both know the true story of her life, and have communicated it to Elminster and Khelben with the strict admonition to respect Tabra's pri-

Tabra has much treasure hidden away in Bargewright Inn and elsewhere. Notably, she has a cache in the roof of her house, in her canopied bed, and in a house she owns in Waterdeep. She keeps her mastery of magic as secret as possible, but always carries a full complement of spells [5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3]. Notably, she bears the powerful Netherese spell *dragonshape* (see Appendix III). She uses it when in great personal danger or to defend Bargewright Inn against powerful attacks. She has thus earned herself the reputation of being a disguised gold dragon.

TANATASKAR MOONWIND (CN hmF7; STR 17,CON 17). Tanataskar is the quiet, pleasant master of the Cointoss tavern in Yartar. He loves to hear tales of adventure and aches to be an adventurer again. However, he cannot let himself do that.

Once a devout servant of Tempus, he inadvertently offended the god by his boastful pride and fell under a curse. Whenever he draws blood in a fight, he goes berserk, attacking all things around him wildly for 12 rounds. During that time, he blinks randomly around, moving thrice per round, always emerging near a living creature, and getting an attack at each. Thus, he makes three attacks per round, all at +3 to hit. Two or even all three of the attacks in a round may be against the same creature if the situation limits his targets. During this time, a continuous rain of broken weapons pours from Tanataskar's body; these manifestations vanish a round after they appear and fall to the



ground. None of the fragments belong to the tavernmaster, nor does he seem to be harmed by them. During the manifestation of the curse, he is protected as if by a protection against normal missiles.

Tanataskar wants to be free of this curse, but he doesn't want to endanger friends or fellow adventurers with him. So, he doesn't dare to go adventuring. Still, he's always eager to talk to traveling wizards or priests of Tempus, hoping to learn some way to be freed from the effect. In many dreams, Tempus has presented himself to Tanataskar as a talking sword. The sword always has the same message for Tanataskar: "A great task awaits ye, if ye can master thyself again."

TCHANDRAE EUINWOOD (NG hf Fl; INT 17). This quiet, gray-eyed, 12-year-old girl currently lives in Kheldell. She has long, brown hair, a calm, fearless manner, and a natural spell-like power akin to legend lore or the psionic ability of object reading. Elminster says that she is "touched by Mystra" and is no doubt intended by the goddess for great things. He has examined her at work, and reports that Tchandrae has no psionic abilities as they are generally understood in Faerûn. She simply handles an object for at least four rounds, and then speaks what comes into her head about the item. Like the legend lore spell, such information is often cryptic, but it is also often more than could possibly be understood from mere visions of people, surroundings, and events concerning the item. In practice, the information is as complete as the DM wishes it to be.

Elminster says that Mystra has remained silent when queried as to the future or nature of Tchandrae. However, on at least one occasion (when the child was threatened with abduction by a Zhentarim agent), the wizard Ghelkyn found himself transported instantly to her side.

TESSARIN "LONGTRESSES" ALARMUN (NG hf W13; INT 18, WIS 17, CHA 17). Tessarin is currently the First Speaker of the Council of Nesmé and the *de facto* ruler of that increasingly powerful town. She is an attractive woman known for her straight, ankle-length, ash-blond hair, her quick wit, and her ready and powerful spells. She has a small arsenal of magical items. Lately, she has become a close friend of her former rival, the one-time high priestess of Waukeen, Jygil Zelnathra. Jygil is now her apprentice.

Tessarin dreams of building Nesmé into a powerful, secure city of culture and learning in the North. She intends for her city to someday rival Silverymoon and to join the Lords'



Tabra

Alliance. She'd like to devise or find new and powerful spells to defend Nesmé, and she's also looking for a magic-using mate to share her life and power with. Until then, she enwraps herself in the business of building Nesmé into a major power. The key, she believes, is manipulating adventurers into doing most of the work.

THORN TLASSALUNE (NE hm T9; DEX 18, CHA 16). Thorn is the keeper of the Stone Stallion inn in Amphail. He's a long-haired, engaging, wouldbe minstrel who plays the lute badly. He claims to be a former luthier's apprentice from Amn, though he's really from Tethyr. He was a thief who stole as much as he could in the fall of the crown and then got out fast. He left with a slave girl he'd bought to be his bride from traveling Calishite slavers. Finding Amphail's inn vacant, he bought it and settled down, burying most of his loot under the cellar floor. He grew to love his wife Khalarra, but she died recently in childbirth, leaving him with five daughters. Thorn is growing restless, and is willing to sponsor and fence for adventurers, dealing with contacts he's developed in Waterdeep. Thorn isn't quite ready to ride away from the





Tolgar Anuvien of Goldenfields

inn into adventure, but that day will probably come soon.

TOLGAR ANUVIEN. (NG hm P18 of Chauntea; STR 16, INT 16, WIS 18, CHA 16). Tolgar is a senior member of the famous Waterdhavian adventuring band known as the Company of Crazed Venturers. He's an impressive, gray-haired veteran of many frays and intrigues. The founder and leader of Goldenfields, Tolgar is now truly happy doing what Chauntea intended him to.

Tolgar is quick-witted and possesses a dry sense of humor. He is known to wear twin rings of spell storing. They definitely carry some healing spells, and at least one dispel magic, but the other spells are a mystery. He also carries a mace +3 that can emit one 4d6 fireball and one blade barrier per day. He calls this mace "Chauntea's Fire and Sword." Tolgar is also known to bear several steel vials in his boots, including healing drafts and a potion of gaseous form.

Tolgar amassed great wealth, including many magical items, in his adventuring days. Some of it is hidden in Piergeiron's Palace in Waterdeep. More of the treasure is in a private house owned by Tolgar there, and still more is somewhere in or near Waterdeep's Inn of the Dripping Dagger. Tolgar's friend Malchor Harpell also safeguards some of Tolgar's riches in the Tower of Twilight, on the east side of Neverwinter Wood. Of course, the main bulk of Tolgar's wealth is hidden in Goldenfields. His community used to be a significant drain on his treasury, but it now adds to his riches with each passing day.

Thieves beware: Tolgar fully earned both his nicknames: "The Patiently Vengeful," and "Beholderslayer."

TOSKER NIGHTSWORD (LN hm F7; STR 16, DEX 16). Tosker is the owner and keeper of the remote inn known as Calling Horns. He is a retired guide and hunter who knows the Evermoors and the western fringes of the High Forest as well as any person alive.

However, he doesn't know where to find the main treasure cache of the Bored Swords, the adventuring group who gave him the inn. He does have access, via a trapdoor under his bed, to a small cache of coins, potions of healing, and a rod of smiting. Tosker will use the latter, and intends to save the potions for himself and his family, selling them only very dearly (for at least 1,500 gp each).

VELANTHA WAERDAR (CG hf P10 of Tymora; STR 16, INT 16, WIS 18, CHA 17). Velantha is the high priestess of the Happy Hall of Fortuitous Happenstance in Yartar. She is a quick witted, gracious leader, skilled in dealing with Yartarrans, visiting adventurers, and mighty merchants alike. She tries not to make enemies or appear capricious or uncaring, but she delights in stirring up chaos, forcing others to trust in their luck, take chances, and otherwise unwittingly follow the way of the Lady.

Those who embrace the worship of Tymora can quickly and easily become her friends. She is on an intimate basis with more than one band of adventurers. Many come to visit her regularly and lavish gifts on the temple, but a year rarely passes without Velantha weeping on her knees before the Lady's altar for the loss of yet another good friend.

Many adventurers are buried in the temple crypt, and Velantha feels it her duty to compile all she can learn of their careers. These records are kept in her private library and copies are spell-preserved under glass upon their graves. These markers have led many later adventurers to find the treasure caches or unfinished business of the fallen.

Velantha is, in the words of Elminster, "an intriguing soul," passionate and yet demure, manipulative and yet untouched by cynicism.



She possesses perhaps the best overview of human adventuring activities in the North over the last three decades or so. She knows or has deduced where many dragons lair, where ruins and treasure caches must lie, and where the Cult of the Dragon and other Beast Cult forces are massing their power. Most adventurers of the North revere her and aid her willingly, obeying her as if she were their ruler.

XARA TANTLOR (NG hf W12; INT 18, DEX18,CHA 16).Xara is a young rising star among mages in the North. She is an energetic explorer of tombs and ruins in the Interior, and she is always seeking new spells. She funds her activities by casting spells for hire and selling potions from her shop in Silverymoon, the Shining Scroll. She has a loyal faerie dragon companion named Villynk who considers herself the true owner of the Shining Scroll.

Xara, a diminunative, bustling woman, favors purple, green, or dark brown robes. They're always plain, but she adorns them with a cummerbund girdle and large, ornate, magical silver jewelry. Her finery harbors battle spells or protections usually housed in wands or rings.

Xara enjoys the company of adventurers and is quick to make new friends. However, those who trick or mistreat her will find her a deadly enemy-she has many adventurer friends to call on for assistance. For a while she collected and mounted locks of the hair of Zhentarim mages who came to slay her, but she's grown bored with the collection. Today, it gathers dust mounted on a wooden shield on one wall of her shop. If you pull one of the "tassels," a bell will sound in her residence near the shop. The two buildings are actually connected by an invisible skyway. This allows Xara to trot from one building to the other three floors above the street that separates them and over the top of an intervening house.

YATHER NDAGLOL (NG hmW13; INT18,CON 17). Yather is the owner of the Helm at Highsun, a tavern in Red Larch. Yather is a recluse who keeps to his locked and warded rooms at the back of the tavern. No magical item can enter the warded area unless Yather himself touches it while he utters a secret password. Otherwise, the ward will seem to be a solid stone wall to the item bearer.

Yather runs the tavern by means of wizard eye spells. He appears only if the building or the staff are endangered. Should this happen, he comes forth wielding powerful rods and wands as well as a full roster of battle spells.

Yather has a pseudodragon familiar and an adventuring past that includes visits to other planes.

He also has a project that is consuming most of his time. He's trying to perfect a mobile, invisible wardmist centered on himself. He wants it to travel with him and sustain him so that he need never eat or drink and will never age or die. So far, he hasn't had much success. He does have a semipermanent, mobile, 30-foot-diameter magical field centered on himself that can duplicate the effects of a light spell at will. It also allows him to regenerate 1 hp of damage every 12 turns.

Unfortunately, the field is linked to the soul of an older wizard, now undead. This wizard, Alanagus Chanther, exists only as a floating, talking skull. The skull can't be turned. It has no magic of its own, though it flies at MV F1 18 (A). It is AC1 and has 14 hp, but it can't attack anyone. It can talk, though, and it does so endlessly. It chooses to talk to Yather, hampering his studies and driving him into furies of distracted frustration. Yather will do almost anything to be rid of the skull, but he doesn't know how he can do that without revealing his condition to others.

Yather is very rich. Some of his wealth is invested in Waterdeep and various trading companies operating in the Heartlands. A lot of it, though, is hidden in Red Larch, somewhere near the Helm. It is not unguarded.

ZESPARA ALATHER (CG hfF7; STR17,DEX 18, INT 17, CHA 17). Zespara is the owner of the House of the Bright Blade in Mirabar. She is also one of the finest human swordsmiths working in Faerûn today. A sometime adventurer, Zespara has made some powerful friends, notably, a number of anonymous mages. She is a Harper, and sometimes operates as an agent for the Lords' Alliance. As such, she has slain dangerous agents of the Zhentarim, the Red Wizards, and the Arcane Brotherhood.

Zespara is a lithe, petite woman whose corded biceps and shoulders are the only sign of her great strength. She has long, straight, brown hair that reaches to the backs of her knees. When she's working at her forge, she ties her hair back and wears a warrior's helm to keep it from being burnt by sparks. She can drink as much as any six warriors without becoming intoxicated, and sometimes uses this capacity to feign drunkeness and then eavesdrop on or follow suspicious folk who may serve the enemies of the Alliance.



# Appendix II: Wards of the North



s Volo notes, magical wards are used extensively in human and elven habitations in the North. Elven

magics are beyond the scope of this book. Elminster warns that they're also more powerful than the wards addressed here. Some are akin to the spell-altering and/or banning mythals laid in such cities as Myth Drannor. For example, one such elven ward denies the passage of magical items. Human wardings, though, are almost all variants of one basic magic, the 7th-level wizard spell wardmist.

Such wards exist primarily to keep wolves, trolls, orcs, and larger, less intelligent predators from stalking inhabitants and livestock in settled, protected areas. Wards also discourage brigands or unwanted wanderers from disturbing the privacy of cloistered clergy, wizards who value seclusion over the maintenance of a large defensive force, or places deemed sacred to a religion. Some warded areas are simply made safer for the exclusive use of a trading or political group, clan, or adventuring band.

#### Wardmist

(Evocation, Alteration, Enchantment/Charm)

Range: Special Components: V, S, M Duration: Permanent Casting Time: 1 hour Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: Special

This spell requires the use of an amount of silver larger in total volume than the caster's fist. Other material components are phase spider silk and three powdered pieces of amber of no less than 500 gp value each. (All the spell components are destroyed in the casting of the spell.) The caster must stand in an area that will become part of the ward and visualize the route of the desired ward boundary. An area of 600 square feet per level of the caster may be enclosed. If the wizard tries to enclose too large an area, the spell fails and is wasted. Mages casting simultaneous wardmists may combine their protections.

The spell creates a *wardmist*. This is a 40-foot-high, 60-foot-wide band of permanent mist that must rest on the ground, floor, or other solid surface (it need not be level). The area protected by the ward is measured from the



inner edge of the *wardmist*; the thickness of the mist is not included. The ward extends 40 feet beneath the surface of the ground, and may be narrower than 60 feet in width wherever desired. Its boundaries can twist and turn corners as sharply and as often as desired to protect a certain area, and they may exclude whatever areas the caster desires. Once cast, a *wardmist* can't be moved.

A wardmist can always be freely entered or left. Beings entering it are sensed by the spell, which reacts by flashing a radiant or audible warning (or both, as desired) to a specific spot or being. The spot or being is set upon casting and it cannot be changed thereafter. Such a warning would still function in the location of a destroyed room or inside the tomb of a dead being.

Warnings classify those who enter the *wardmist* into two categories: those who bear ward tokens, and intruders. *Wardmist* warnings transmit numbers and general locations of all intruders.

Sight and all known magical and psionic means of scrying won't work through the boundaries of a *wardmist*. A being in the mist can see through the mist to a distance of about 10 feet in darkness, and 40 feet when light is present. One cannot see out of the mist though, even if one is only inches away from its edge. One cannot see out of the mist to either the area it excludes or the area it encloses. A *wardmist* can be seen over freely by anyone tall enough or stationed high enough to be able to do so.

### Wardmist Guardian Monsters

#### d8 Number & Type Monsters

- 1 2d6 baneguards\*
- 2. 1d3 blazing bones†
- 3. 2d8 bonebats\*
- 4 3d4 helmed horrors\*
- 5 3d4 skeletons or 2d4 monster skeletons (MC1)
- 6 1d2 watchghosts‡
- 7 1d2 wraiths (MC1)
- 8 2d12 zombies (MC1)

Monsters marked with an asterisk (\*) appear in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set box. Those marked with a dagger (†) appear in the Ruins of Myth Drannor boxed set. A diesis (‡) denotes those in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set. Those appearing in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® volumes have the volume number appended to the abbreviation "MC." DMs lacking a particular source should substitute another monster from the list.

When visibility is reduced by darkness, intruders in a *wardmist* who don't use lamps, markers, or other means of proceeding in a straight path will move in a random direction each round of movement in which they fail a secret Intelligence check. It is possible to wander, lost, in a *wardmist* for quite some time.

While in a *wardmist*, intruders are subject to attack from guardian monsters linked to the spell during casting if the intruders fail a saving throw vs. spell. Guardians are teleported to within 20 feet of an intruder.



Guardian monsters are kept in stasis by the *wardmist* when not active. They become inactive again 2d4 rounds after an intruder is slain or leaves the warded area. Guardians may be magically healed at any time by the application of potions or spells. If a guardian monster is slain, though, it's gone forever and can't be resurrected or replaced by the *wardmist* spell. Only the types of magically created or undead monsters listed in the boxed text on the previous page can be linked to a *wardmist*.

In some rare cases, a wardmist may contain more powerful guardians. For example, one powerful known wardmist contains a lich accompanied by two or more skeletons augmented by a imbue with spell ability spell that enables them to cast magic missile, lightning bolt, and other combat spells. These skeletons are robed and hooded as if they were mages, and behave as such. They even speak to intruders in cryptic challenges using magic mouth spells. Their task is to reveal and neutralize any priests who intrude into the ward, so that the lich can act freely to deal with other intruders. (This particular set of guardians is linked to the ward around the Talonmist Towers, a haunted castle northwest of Westbridge in the foothills north of Kryptgarden Forest. The castle is the seat of an evil family of sorcerers, the Talonmists.)

A wardmist doesn't seem to exist for a being who carries the proper token. Ward tokens must be made of a certain material, and they must bear a certain rune, drawn while a secret word is uttered. The material, the rune, and the word are all set during the ward's casting, and they cannot be changed thereafter. For convenience, tokens to a particular ward are usually of a common shape and size, but the wardmist will recognize anything of the right material that bears the right rune. In some large holdings, warders carry rings of varying tokens just as they do rings of keys. Tokens can be made freely after the casting of a wardmist—but the requirements for a valid token can't be changed without using another wardmist spell.

A being bearing a valid token can't see or be affected by a wardmist, and isn't subject to attacks by any guardian monsters linked to the *wardmist*. An intruder who seizes a valid token from another being, even while in battle with a guardian, will be instantly free of such guardian monster attacks.

Only one wardmist spell can exist in a given area. If a dispel magic is cast on a wardmist, it increases visibility around the caster by 20 feet, delays the appearance of any guardian monsters by a round, and sets off an immediate warning. Only a limited wish or wish can destroy a wardmist. Even repeated dispel magics will fail, and an anti-magic shell cannot form within a wardmist. If this is attempted, the anti-magic shell is wasted, and the wardmist is unaffected.

The most common addition to a wardmist is a band of armed human guards assigned to respond to the magic's warnings. Spell triggers are also popular; these are spells that have





specific preset conditions to set them off. They then launch the effects of other "hanging" spells, also cast earlier.

A good example of a *spell trigger* attached to a *wardmist* is one set in the back pantry window of a certain private home in Everlund. If a being without a ward token tries to get in through the window, they'll suffer the effects of an 8d6 *lightning bolt* that springs from it. A paper strip has been stretched across the inside of the window frame. If it is torn, a second *lightning bolt* of the same strength leaps out through the frame.

Elminster warns that similar wards are used all over the Realms, especially by the more powerful wizards and priests, and that Volo has encountered only a very few of them.

The common use of wardings began in the North, probably in ancient Netheril. The most ancient wards are found in tombs, in storage areas under ruins, or in deep glades in the various forests of the North. These ancient wards often have mythal-like magical alterations. These include wild magic effects and prohibitions against magical items. In the latter case, magical items simply can't enter the wardmist. Some of the later wards from the ancient period included prohibitions against spells of a specific school or type, such as those involving heat, fire, or lightning. There are also rare instances of gigantic blade barrier- like magics that encompass an entire wardmist around a castle or temple.



# Appendix III: Elminster's Notes



ome of the folk, places, and things Volo mentioned in the Faerûnian edition of this guidebook leave

players of the AD&D® game needing more detailed information. The results of Elminster's occasional grudging willingness to impart such lore appear here.

### Magical Spells Dragonshape

An ability that folklore gives to all powerful archmages is the ability to take the shape of a dragon to do battle or to flee from disaster. Many spells enable wizards of sufficient power to take on the outward likeness of dragons and other large, powerful creatures, but a rare spell from longago Netheril enables a few archmages of the North to use all the powers of a dragon. Dragonshape is now commonly known only in Halruaa, although Tabra, who dwells in Bargewright Inn, has the spell in her repertoire. This 9th-level wizard spell appears hereafter.

### Dragonshape

(Alteration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S
Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 9

Area of Effect: The caster or one

touched being

Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster or another being to take the form of any type of dragon the caster has personally seen. To cast the spell on another being, the caster must be in physical contact with that being.

The recipient acquires all the powers of a dragon, including spelllike abilities, immunities, magic resistance, and the like. People affected by the spell retain their own Intelligence and any memorized spells. These spells can be cast by willpower alone while in dragonshape, without expending material components. The recipient is not subject to subdual, and can use his or her own magic resistance, if it's higher than that of the dragon form. Magical items that are already operating will continue to function while the spell recipient is in dragon form. However, a being in



dragonshape can only activate magical items that can be manipulated with altered speech, claws, and so on. Worn magical items are altered by the spell so that they still fit; nonmagical items temporarily become part of the dragon form.

Mastery of dragon powers requires 1d3 rounds if the recipient has never taken the shape of the particular dragon before. Except for purely physical abilities such as flying, biting, and breathing, unmastered powers can't be used.

The change into dragon form cures damage to the spell recipient as if a *heal* had been cast on him or her. Changing back to normal form can be done at will and takes only a second. This also has a healing effect. The recipient returning to normal form regains half of any hit points lost while in dragon form. Beings cannot shift repeatedly between dragonshape and normal form; one change each way is included in the spell.

Beings in *dragonshape* can communicate in the language of the form they've taken, along with any other means of communication common to chosen dragon's form, as well as retaining their usual speech.

### Ghelkyn's Wounding

The reclusive creator of this spell is rumored to have once used it in a rage to slay a rival. It was an action that caused him such remorse that he withdrew from the strife of civilized life. The 4th-level wizard spell he devised appears hereafter.

## Ghelkyn's Wounding (Necromancy)

Range: Touch Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: One being

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell enables the caster to steal vital energy (hit points) from a foe that the caster touches. A successful attack roll is required to touch hostile or unaware targets, but the spell need not be unleashed until contact is made. The spell drains 2d8+1 hit points from the target unless a successful saving throw vs. spell is made. One of the drained hit points is always lost in the transfer, but the caster gains the remainder as healing energy. Any existing damage to the caster can be healed instantly by the influx of energy. Any excess hit points that are left after all damage is cured are retained for 1 turn. Any damage to the caster during that turn is first taken from these excess hit points. After the turn ends, the excess hit points are lost.

If a target creature successfully saves against a *Ghelkyn's wounding*, it loses only 1 hp, which is not gained by the caster. The target is then stunned (unable to take any action during the round) and acts last in the following round.

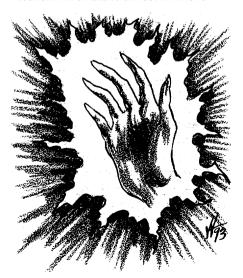
The caster of a *Ghelkyn's wounding* spell can also choose to give vital energy to a target. If the target is



willing or unconscious, no saving throw is necessary. An undead creature can be harmed by such a gift of energy; the caster gives up the hit points, but the undead creature also suffers the same amount of hit points of damage if it fails to save vs. spell. If a target saves against a gift of vital energy, the caster still loses the hit points, and the target is stunned (unable to take any action during the remainder of the round) and acts last on the round following. In the case of target creatures able to alter their state or location, any such change is prevented until the end of the round following the caster's touch.

### Moonglow

This magical process was once a popular means of marking trails and lighting gardens or courtyards at night. It was commonly employed in the North by elves and the humans of Netheril in ancient times. In more



recent times, this magic has fallen into disuse.

Few folk remember the simple spell used in the practice, but many adventurers have seen its results. Subterranean passages and old roads, now overgrown in the passage of time, are sometimes marked by rows of moonglow symbols. Solitary witches, hermits, and other folk who take to caves in the wilderness often gravitate to places where moonglows still operate. Though the light may attract moths and other insects, it keeps nocturnal predators from using the caves as dens. Of course, it also provides a soft nighttime illumination for the user. The 3rd-level wizard spell moonglow is usually found today only in a few crumbling grimoires or on scrolls lost for years in tombs or ruins. It appears hereafter.

### Moonglow

(Alteration)

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 1-foot cube
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster to draw a glowing symbol in the air or on a solid surface. The symbol is drawn with pure water, which vaporizes from the drawing finger during the spell. The symbol glows with a faint, silver-blue light, like moonlight, until dispelled. The glow can be seen



only in darkness, and is otherwise invisible. The symbol consists of radiant air, and cannot be moved or modified except by casting another *moonglow* spell on it. The glowing figure cannot bear any magical powers, such as those of *glyph* or *symbol*. Neither may it be linked to any other magic via a *spell trigger* or other magic.

A moonglow spell can be used to write messages and even to set down sigils and runes, but these cannot have magical powers. In some cases, wizards have deliberately used this limitation to draw harmful runes or glyphs for recognition purposes or as false warnings to keep away. Symbols created with this spell cannot turn, animate, or react, but can be fashioned into pointing hands, masks that resemble human faces, and other shapes that might convey meaning.

A moonglow symbol remains stationary unless cast on an object, whereupon it moves with that object. If the object is destroyed, the symbol is also. In the dark, moonglow symbols give off enough light to read by.

### Magical Items Chardalyn

These rare, black stones are found only in the northern Sword Coast area of Faerûn. They occur naturally, and are not a specially enchanted stone. Each stone can naturally entrap a single spell cast into it, releasing the magic for its usual spell effects later, when the stone is shattered.

If a chardalyn is hurled at an enemy and breaks, it could become the focal point of a *fireball* cast into it years earlier. A chardalyn can only absorb one spell. Once it is "full," other magic has no effect on it.

These stones always absorb spells cast deliberately into them. They can also absorb incoming spells on a roll of 7 or less on a d12. This is useful when the incoming spell is hostile and directed at the stonebearer. Chardalyn can take in *lightning bolts* and fireball flames that have already manifested (preventing any damage from them from occurring), but the bearer of a stone can't choose when this power will or won't work. (Once again, it only has the potential to work if the chardalyn is not already holding a spell.) Several veteran Riders of Nesmé wear rings of fire resistance coupled with shields studded with chardalyns that hold fireball spells into battle. A foe who shatters a chardalyn with a weapon blow suffers immediate damage from the exploding flames.

## The Nine Jewels of Neverwinter

These gemstones are fist-sized and cabochon-cut (polished, with no facets). There are nine stones, each of a different type and hue. They were enchanted long ago by a cabal of wizards who sought to rule Neverwinter as lords and ladies. The stones were soon used against each other, and they were then hidden by the surviving owners.



All of the gems are AC1 and have 70 hp; they shatter if reduced to 0 hp. They make all item saving throws as if they were leather, except that their save vs. disintegration is 10. A *jewel* randomly loses one of its powers for every 10 hp of current damage. Lost powers return as the *jewel* regains hit points. Each regenerates 1 hp per day; this is the only known method by which they are "cured" of damage; healing spells don't affect them.

Each *jewel* has a secret word engraved in tiny script on one side of it.

### The Nine Jewels of Neverwinter

Each jewel has different spells, as follows:

**Amethyst (Purple):** Emits ray of enfeeblement; blocks chain lightning.

**Carnelian (Red-Brown):** Emits blade barrier; blocks wall of fire.

**Diamond (Clear):** Emits magic missile (5 missiles per spell); blocks magic missile.

**Emerald (Green):** Emits color spray; blocks lightning bolt.

**Fire Opal (Fiery Red):** Emits flame strike; blocks cone of cold.

**Onyx (White):** Emits chain lightning; blocks blade barrier.

**Ruby (Deep Red):** Emits fireball; blocks wall of ice.

**Sapphire (Blue):** Emits cone of cold; blocks fireball.

**Topaz (Yellow):** Emits flaming sphere; blocks flame strike.

If this word is spoken by a being touching the stone, enough hit points are instantly drained from the stone to exhaust it entirely or to completely *heal* the being—whichever occurs first. A totally drained stone crumbles into dust, forever gone. A being using this power can't control the drain so as to leave just a few hit points in a *jewel*.

The nine enchanted gems share some common powers. They create food and water (once per day), and they have the ability to feather fall (automatically, whenever needed by stone or bearer). Each can teleport one being touching or wearing it per day, between power points. These power points are specific spots, usually chambers deep within old keeps or important buildings in the following cities: Ascore (now a ruin), Hellgate Keep, Karse (now a ruin on the eastern fringes of the High Forest), the ruins of Illusk in Luskan, Mirabar, Neverwinter, Silverymoon, and Sundabar. Agents of Hellgate Keep eagerly seek these gems because of this power, and their owners keep them secret for the same reason. Each gem can also emit water breathing once per day, for up to 9 hours at a time, when grasped and ordered. Each can allow its bearer the power of water walking for the same frequency and duration. Each stone allows the bearer to make one attack per day at +5 to hit. (Players should announce the use and then make the attack roll.) This power functions only once in 24 hours, regardless of how many bearers a gem may technically have during that time.



A *jewel* can also emit a specific spell twice a day (but only once per round). It can also block a specific spell. Blocked spells are deflected to a target chosen by the silent will of the deflector; if the stone bearer chooses no target, blocked spells are reflected back 100% at the source. Only the specific spells (and identical magical item discharges) listed in the boxed text at left are affected. Where applicable, emitted magics function as if wielded by a caster of 20th level.

XP Value (For Each): 10,000 (the process of enchantment has been lost with the passing years).

GP Value (Each): 18,000.

### Spellbattle Ring

This ring gives the wearer the ability to dispel certain magical spells. The wearer is instantly made aware of any release, casting, or exercise of any magical or spell-like psionic power that occurs within a 120-foot spherical radius of the ring. The general effects of all such power releases (for example, fiery attacking spell, shape transforming spell, illusionary magic, etc.) are identified to the ring-wearer.

The wearer of the ring can choose to dispel a spell cast within range or to change its target. When the ring is told to change targets, the new target being gets the chance to save vs. spell at -2 to avoid the ring's effects. Failure means that she or he takes full spell effects. (Note that this does not change control of the spell to the ring-wearer; if the spell is magic that allows the caster to influence others.



the caster is still in control—they're just affecting the wrong being.) Success means that the ring dispels the magic instead. This is also what occurs if a *charm* or a similar spell is hurled back at its caster. A caster can't be made to turn himself or herself to stone or addle his or her own thoughts, but the spell cast is instead wasted. Combat spells such as *fireball* and *lightning bolt* can be turned back at their caster for full damage.

The ring can affect only cast spells, including "hung" spells that have been activated by a *spell trigger* or other action. The ring has no effect on magical item discharges or psionics. Otherwise, the ring always successfully dispels magic when commanded to do so. A maximum of



one spell per round can be affected. The ring gives its wearer no protection against additional spells, except to identify all incoming spells. Thus, the wearer can choose the most harmful to deal with.

XP Value: 2,500. GP Value: 4,000.

### Storm Star

This magical weapon is a morning star of ancient design, thought to have been devised in Netheril. Various specimens exist in the North; most of them are electrum-plated steel. They tend to be as long and heavy as the biggest morning stars. They are +1, +2, or +3 weapons, and they crackle with spectacular, though harmless, arcs of lightning when they're wielded.

Once per turn, the wielder of a storm star can unleash a battle bolt of lightning. This is *chain lightning* that strikes for 8d6 points of damage in addition to the purely physical weapon damage. Of course, a successful attack roll is required for the physical weapon damage to be inflicted. After the chain lightning strikes the first target, it then arcs up to 70 feet away in a direction chosen by the weapon wielder. It can even arc towards a moving target chosen by the wielder. Beings endangered by this first "hop" must save vs. spell or take 6d6 points of damage. Success means they take no damage at all; the bolt missed them. After the first hop, the bolt hops three more times, arcing up to 20 feet at a time towards the nearest concentration of metal. If no

metal is present, it will seek the largest concentration of life and movement. The bolt does 4d6 points of damage on the first of these three hops, 3d6 on the next, and 2d6 on the last. In all cases, there is no damage if a save is made. If the weapon misses striking its first intended target, the target takes no physical damage but must still save vs. spell or suffer the full 8d6 points of lightning damage as the bolt arcs to them. The magic of this weapon can never harm its wielder, though the bolt can hop back to that person and then away again.

A *storm star* does 2d4+1 and 2d4+3 physical damage per strike, depending on the strength of its enchantment.

XP Value: 1,000. GP Value: 1,500.

### Beasts of the North Crag Cat

The fabled Hunter-of-Men is a manyfanged, sure-footed predator of the North. It may be found anywhere except deep forest, but prefers the rock ledges and cliffs of the high country near the mountains.

Its cry sounds like a sudden, human scream of terror. It also often causes such sounds from its victims as it hunts, for it prefers human flesh to all other prey.

Crag cats can't be detected or traced by magic, though many folk say they can "feel" when one is near or watching. Crag cats have a natural



spell turning ability that works like a ring of spell turning for most spells, but always turns all enchantment/ charm spells 100%, causing the caster to be feebleminded for the spell duration (or until the usual methods for recovering from a feeblemind are applied). If the source of the spell is an item, it is rendered useless for 1 day per level of the spell used, but thereafter functions normally again. This ability is automatic, working whenever a crag cat is alive. It need not even be conscious. This defense affects all magic directed at the crag cat in a given round.

The Hunter-of-Men is intelligent. It knows its territory well, and usually stalks its prey. It prefers to trap prey, avoiding counterattacks or ambushes. It often attacks when its prev is asleep, exhausted, or otherwise weakened. A favorite attack form is the pounce from above. This is usually the only time the cat can use its rear claws in combat. Crag cats can leap 60 feet horizontally, but can descend twice that distance in a leap before any falling damage applies. (Consider 120 feet to be the start of the fall for determining falling damage.) Though these cats are usually solitary hunters, they avoid fighting each other, and may be found in family groups of two parents and 1d4 cubs in spring, or in hungry packs of 1d4+2 adults in severe winter weather. Cubs are half strength, and have no pounce or rear claw attacks.

Crag Cat: INT 13; Uncommon; AL CN; AC 6; MV 16 (leap: 60' horizontal);

HD 3+3; THACO 17; #ATT 3 or 5; Dmg 1d6 + 3/1d6 + 3 (front claws)/4d4 (bite) and 1d4+3/1d4+3 (rear claws, in pounce only); SA pounce; SD *spell turning* ability; MR nil (except for *spell turning*); SZ M to L (6'-9' long, 3½'-4' high at shoulder); ML 18; XP 420.

### Glacier Snake

This rare monster of the snow and ice is a furred reptile whose internal processes keep it warm enough to function. It's a fearless predator of the glaciers that comes down into low-lands only in severe winter weather. Glacier snakes are a brown-furred monsters that grow up to 10 feet long and sport fearsome, ripping teeth around their mouths. They have no venom, but their tails end in a stabbing bone stinger that can be used in combat. The pelt of a glacier snake is so thick, soft, and fine-haired that it has value in garment making.

The metabolism of a glacier snake keeps its body temperature high. Blood escapes as steam when one is wounded. The snakes devour and ingest endlessly; there is no such thing as a satiated glacier snake. If unchecked, these creatures will devour every member of an adventuring band or encountered nomadic tribe without stopping.

**Glacier Snake:** INT 2; Very Rare; AL CN; AC 5; MV 17; HD 3+2; THACO 17; #ATT 2; Dmg 3d4 (bite)/2d6 (tail stab); SA nil; SD regenerates 1 lost hp at the end of every 4th round (due to metabolism); MR nil; SZ M to L (6'-12' long); ML 20; XP 175.



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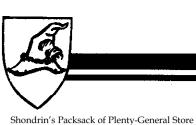
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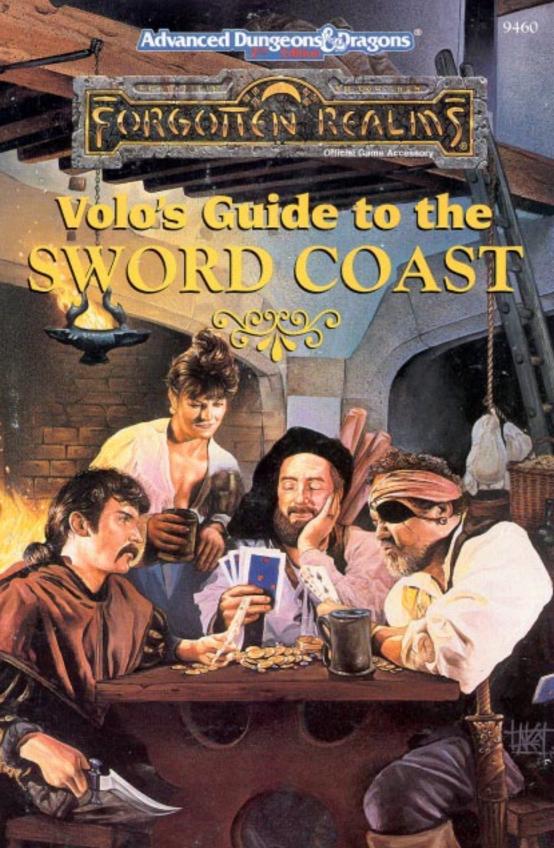
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# Volo's Guide To The Sword Coast

In all our years of wandering, We never use up the splendid store. At each wonder and marvel pondering, As Faerûn proudly presents us with more.

Revendar the Far-Traveled,
 "Rhyme of the Road,"
 Year of the Serpent



### Dedication

To Mike and Roxy Griffith— In hopes that your little one will join you in befriending Elminster and exploring corners of the Realms thus far hidden from us all.

### Credits

**Design:** Ed Greenwood **Editing:** Julia Martin

Cover Art: John and Laura Lakey

Interior Art: Paul Jaquays and Valerie Valusek

Cartography: Diesel

**Typesetting:** Angelika Lokotz **Production:** Paul Hanchette

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TSR Ltd. 120 Church End Cherry Hinton Cambridge CB1 3LB United Kingdom

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# Introduction



his guidebook is the next in my ongoing tour of the Realms—I assure thee all, gentles, that you'll find no

more diligent guide than your humble servant, Volothamp Geddarm. These last few seasons I've trudged, ridden, swum, sailed, and even flown from the icy wastes north of the Spine of the World to the hot, steaming jungles of the Shining South-and beyond-all in thy service, gentle traveler. I've been to places I thought were but legends, and seen sights stranger than magic ever showed me. I've seen fallen towers rise up into the sky again and had a solid road vanish under my feet when the moonlight shining on it failed.

Where'er you may wish to go upon the face of known Faerûn, I have ventured there before you. When this guidebook proves of aid, I pray you look with favor upon the name of:



Volothamp Geddarm

Volo? Aye (sigh). He's getting, I suppose, better. Ye needn't tell folk I said that.



Elminster of Shadowdale

Volo's Ratings System					
Pipes (Inns)	Tankards (Taverns)	<b>Coins</b> (Prices)	<b>Daggers</b> (Alleyways, Courtyards, etc.)		
Worst	Û		Unsafe		
<b>4</b> 99	00	\$ \$	BB .		
Better 15 15 15	OOO		BB Dangerous		
* ????	0000		BBB +		
Best & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & &	00000	8 8 8 8 8	JJJJ Deadly		



# The Sword Coast



or years, the lands between Waterdeep and bustling Amn have been thought of as the Empty Lands—a vast, inconve-

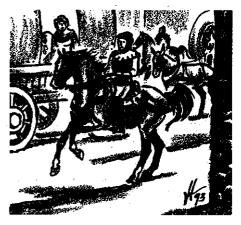
nient stretch of wilderness folk venture into only to get from one place to another. Legends abound of grisly fates that befell unfortunate travelers at the hands of orcs, trolls, hobgoblins (and worse!) said to infest the area in veritable armies. In recent times, dark evil has arisen in ruined Dragonspear Castle, and the snakemen who inhabit the Serpent Hills are extending their patrols to menace folk far afield. As the merchant Falodel of Amn once put it, "The only reason to set foot in the Coast lands is to get down from a caravan wagon that's going to make you a lot of coinswhen it gets to someplace else."

The strategic, in-the-middle location of the Coast lands forces most overland travelers in western Faerûn to visit them, ere long. The main caravan route to the Inner Sea from Amn to the south, and Waterdeep to the north, runs through the Sword Coast. Thanks to both human and bestial predators, the trip has always been dangerous-hence the name Sword Coast. Down through the ages, many folk have dreamed of founding a kingdom in the verdant valley hidden in the moors. A few have tried, notably around Daggerford and northeast of Beregost-but only tattered tales and well-hidden ruins remain of such glories today

The Sword Coast *is* home to some important independent cities: Baldur's Gate, Berdusk, Elturel, Hill's Edge, Iriaebor, and Scornubel.

This guidebook directs the traveler to the things to see and good places to stay in the cities. I also mention craftfolk of note, landmarks, and places it is best to avoid, and discuss key landmarks in the sparsely inhabited, lawless wildernesses between the cities. Readers should note that these wildernesses are studded with many independent holds, castles, and self-styled baronies not discussed here. Those not traveling with a caravan in the Sword Coast are warned to hire escorts of armed, trustworthy adventurers.

For convenience, I've divided this guide into five areas: the Coast, the High Moor, the Fields of the Dead, the Backlands, and Sunset Vale. Isles off the Sword Coast, such as Mintarn and Orlumbor, are not covered in this work. May my words prove useful, and thy journey safe.









# The Coast



ane Hellar of Amn, the famous senior cartographer of the Merchants' League, once called the coast between Water-

deep and Amn: "[L]eagues upon leagues of lawless waste, home to pirates and outlaws who feast on those who must go north or south while depending on the Sea of Swords as their guide, keeping it in sight so as not to lose their way." Zane was not far wrong, but the Coast today is also home to one of the two largest and most powerful cities in the region, Baldur's Gate. (Iriaebor, far inland, is the other.) From its gates south to Amn, the Coast on either side of the Coast Way road is pleasant, verdant farmland. North of the Chionthar as far as the Way Inn. the land is more sparsely inhabited and more dangerous, but it serves as a hunting range for Waterdhavian nobles, wealthy Amnians, and those who must kill wild game to eat.

Travelers are warned that lawlessness is swiftly dealt with by ready, veteran patrols in the lands held by the nobles of Daggerford and in the farmlands under the protection of the Pact, a common defensive agreement covering the lands along the Coast Way from Baldur's Gate to Amn. Throughout the rest of the Coast, the traveler's best protection is a ready blade and friendly magic close to hand. Brigands, goblins, dopplegangers, and kobolds are an everpresent danger. Many stay in roving encampments, living off stolen livestock, and from such bases raid travelers, warehouses, and weakened settlements at will-particularly at night or in bad weather. Near the Troll Hills, in the broken tors known as the Trollclaws, and in the vicinity of the High Moor, trolls can be added to this list of dangers.

On the other hand, game is plentiful for travelers throughout this region. Grouse, bustards, rock doves, and other seacoast birds can readily be shot, slung, or even brought down with flung nets by those who can move quickly and quietly. It is not uncommon for a fat Calishite merchant with a hand crossbow to get three or four rabbits for an evening meal while his servants tether, unsaddle, and water the horses. It is also, one must always remember, not uncommon for three orcs with a tripsnare and ready clubs to bring down that fat merchant just that quickly, and then dine on him and his rabbits!

As long as safety is always kept uppermost in mind, travelers can also expect to gather plentiful nuts and wild raspberries and enjoy delicious wild greens (if the greens are gathered while young and tender). The Coast provides well for those who are patient stalkers and know where to look, whether they be traveler or fell beast.



### Baldur' Gate

This port city is both shelter and lifeline for the folk of the Coast. It is the only place to buy many luxury goods and offers the discerning shopper the widest selection of goods anywhere in the Sword Coast region though usually at prices higher than those in Waterdeep or coastal Amn.

Baldur's Gate is a tolerant but wellpoliced city of merchants, and quiet business as usual is the general order of each day. Baldur's Gate, Berdusk, Neverwinter, and Silverymoon are probably the safest settlements in all western Faerun. In Baldur's Gate, the watch wears distinctive black helms with a vertical red stripe on either side, if you have problems. Not only are the members of the watch vigilant, enthusiastic, wise, and observant, but the Flaming Fist Mercenary Company, over a thousand strong, is based in the city. Every tenth person or so is a member or a watch agent (well, spy) of the Fist, skilled in battle and within a breath or two of numerous armed allies.

The visitor can freely stroll and shop. If you can't carry all you buy, or need help to find your way, guides and porters can be hired at most street corners. These husky youths are known as lamp boys or lamp lasses because they carry lanterns at night to light the way for their patrons.

### Landmarks

Baldur's Gate curves like a great hand or crescent moon around its harbor. *Crescent moon* is the term used by its resident minstrels, who tend to be brassy-voiced tenors and delightfully smoky altos, depending on their gender, but hand describes it better. The fingers of the hand are the many docks and wharves that jut out into the harbor. A bridge from the western shore links the mainland with a rocky islet on which perches the old, massive Seatower of Balduran, which is used as a barracks, naval base, dungeon, and fortress. It has a full armory and catapults to battle hostile ships, and a massive chain can be stretched from it to the outermost wharf on the east side to bar the harbor to invaders.

The harbor boasts no less than four dry-dock slips for boat building and repair, complete with ox-driven pumps. The shipping facilities, I'm told, are among the best in all Faerûn. They feature modern warehouses, movable lamps and cranes, and tight security.

Around the harbor rises a crowded, but clean and prosperous, city. Everything is of stone and is usually wet with either rain, sleet, or fog, depending on the time of day and season. This makes the streets slippery. makes the musk and mushrooms Baldurians grow in their cellars flourish, keeps the flowers and plants that are grown in hanging baskets everywhere green-and makes mildew and mold a constant problem. If it afflicts you, see Halbazzer Drin on Stormshore Street. He's a gruff old wizard who has made his fortune with a spell that banishes mildew (12 gp per casting),



and another that drives all moisture from things without harming them (10 gp per glamer). Despite fantastic offers of gold, gems, and magic from Calishite, Amnian, and other interests, he does not sell scrolls of these spells or reveal the incantations to others.

Buildings in Baldur's Gate tend to be tall and narrow, with slit windows located high up and covered with shutters to block winter winds and nesting seabirds alike. Tall among them rises the grandly spired ducal palace of the four ruling Grand Dukes, known as the High Hall. A place for feasts, court hearings, and administrative business, it boasts a dozen meeting rooms that all citizens can wander in and use to conduct business-unless someone else is already using them. To discourage the miserly from using these as permanent places of business, there's a rule forbidding anyone who entered one of the rooms today from using it tomorrow.

Not far from the palace stands the High House of Wonders, consecrated to Gond. It is the largest of the Gate's three temples. It is a perilous place for the curious; it has been the site of many an explosion and violent self-disassembly of sacred artifacts (which the faithful call *apparati*). Its spreading eastern wings face the Hall of Wonders, also on Windspell Street, where the more successful of Gond's inventions are displayed to the public.

The wrist of the gigantic hand that is Baldur's Gate is marked by the Black







Dragon Gate, or Landward Gate, and its surrounding sprawl of slums, paddocks, cut-rate inns, and stockyards, all of which lie outside the city walls. Not far from the Hall of Wonders, near the Black Dragon Gate, and so near the wrist of Baldur's Gate, is the Wide. This huge open space is the Gate's market. It bustles by day and night, and is usually open spacewise only in the sense that there are no buildings. Temporary stalls, bins, sale tables, and the shoppers thronging to them usually crowd shoulder to shoulder. Deliveries here are often made by tall, strong folk striding through the crowds with tall poles strapped to their chests or backs at the top of which, over an adult human's height aloft, are cribs and crates full of goods.

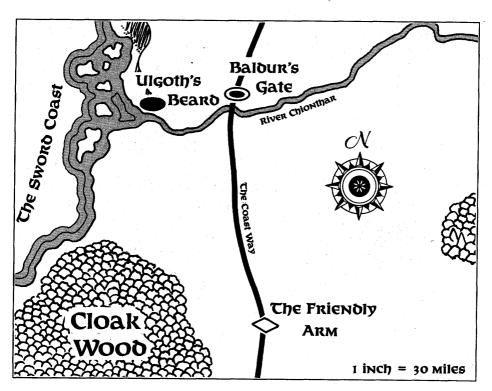
Prices are lower here than elsewhere in the Gate, but business is apt to be sharper. Among the more common vendors of silks, scarves, tobacco, and spices from the farthest reaches of the Shining South are masters of tattooing and disguise, and several minor wizards who specialize in spells that temporarily arrange a client's hair into intricate patterns, cause areas of the body to glow or to adhere to certain scraps of garment or pieces of jewelry, alter skin and hair hue, and even cause scents to wax, wane, or move around the body—sometimes accompanied by radiances. These artisans come and go with the seasons-and, I'm told, the approach of creditors or bounty hunters acting



for far-off authorities. Among the more permanent of these artisans are Lonthalin Mintar and Talessyr Tranth.

Outside the Wide, Baldur's Gate lacks colorful landmarks. The everpresent damp discourages the use of banners, open shops, and the like. Windowboxes support trailing flowers of all sorts. Strolling minstrels, consisting usually of a singer playing a lute or hand harp accompanied by a flutist who also carries a hand drum and occasionally joins in on a chorus, provide another source of color. The Gate has few formal festivals. The largest is the Breaking, commemorating the last passage of ice from the harbor approaches

every spring. The Gate does, however, have a custom of holding quiet street chatter sessions known as cobble parties in particular spots. They are named after the cobblestones that surface most of the streets. These parties are always marked by the use of rose-red torches-which can be bought in several city shops, notably Felogyr's Fireworks (run by Felogyr Sonshal) on Bindle Streetset in wall brackets along the street where the party is held. Baldurians frown on the drunken and debauched. These open-air fests tend to be tale-telling sessions, marked by a clutter of barrels, crates, and stools dragged into the street for folk to sit on while they talk.









### Baldun's Gate

- **1.** The High Hall (ducal palace)
- 2. The Wide (open marketplace)
- **3.** The High House of Wonders (temple consecrated to Gond)
- 4. Hall of Wonders
- 5. Elfsong Tavern
- 6. Seatower of Balduran
- **7.** The Lady's Hall (temple of Tymora)
- **8.** The Water-Queen's House (temple of Umberlee)
- 9. Belltoll Street
- 10. Black Dragon Gate
- 11. Stormshore Street
- 12. Bindle Street
- 13. Windspell Street
- **14.** Sorcerous Sundries (shop and home of Halbazzer Drin, wizard)
- **15.** Felogyr's Fireworks (shop)
- **16.** The Helm and Cloak (inn)
- 17. Three Old Kegs (inn)
- 18. The Blade and Stars (inn)

- **19.** The Blushing Mermaid (inn and tavern)
- **20.** Manycoins House (office of the Merchants' League)
- **21.** Home and Office of Krammoch Arkhstaff, Sage
- **22.** Home and Office of Ragefast, Sage
- **23.** Home and Office of Ramazith Flamesinger, Sage Extraordinaire
- 24. Entrance to the Undercellar
- **25.** The Watchful Shield (shrine to Helm)
- **26.** Shrine of the Suffering (shrine to Ilmater)
- **27.** The Rose Portal (shrine to Lathander)
- **28.** The Unrolling Scroll (shrine to Oghma)
- **29.** The Counting House (money exchange)

Those wishing to overindulge in drink and in the company of the opposite sex are directed to the Undercellar, a little-known, damp, dark warren of linked cellars entered just off the Wide, with exits to 10 alleyways or more, and to the Low Lantern, a ship that cruises the harbor at night while festivities are going on both above and below decks. Daring citizens like to celebrate their marriage nights in the rigging of this vessel while perched precariously aloft or hanging over the night-dark waves from various ropes and sail booms. I've haven't rated the Undercellar or the Lantern because I

haven't tried them. The Undercellar is said to be reasonably priced but rather squalid and shady Many folk like to go masked when enjoying themselves there. The *Lantern* is said to be noisy, fun, and expensive, with drinks dearer than in some of Waterdeep's haughtiest establishments.

Baldur's Gate is otherwise a pleasant but unremarkable city to stroll about in. Cats are everywhere—raised to keep down the shipborne vermin—but there's nary a dog to be seen. Livestock and mounts are kept outside the city in order to ensure maximum cleanliness.



## Hall of Wonders Museum and Shop

### 3 8

This high-pillared stone hall displays the grandest glories of Gond to the faithful and the curious alike for an entrance fee of 4 sp. Its cellars contain replicas of the wonders on display. These can be purchased by the very rich. Folk come from afar to see the marvels here. Many go away thoughtful, determined to devise similar artifices of their own and save themselves the awesome prices charged by the clergy of Gond.

### The Place

The Hall is dimly lit by stationary, enchanted glowing globes and is staffed by ever-watchful priests of Gond. It is crowded with gleaming mechanisms that represent the more successful (safest) inventions devised for the greater glory of Gond Wonderbringer, god of artifice, craft, and construction. The gleaming black double doors of the Hall-and of the High House, its parent temple, which faces it across Windspell Street-levitate in midair by the power of Gond. (The power of Gond in this case is actually extremely potent spells that can be canceled in case of attack, toppling the titanic slabs onto hostile folk who are trying to get in.) These doors on both buildings bear gleaming white, many-toothed wheels-the symbol of Gond — which turn about clockwise slowly and continuously by themselves.

### The Prospect

The Hall has held many marvels over the years. Currently on display are many small devices and a few large pieces. Many of the small devices seem to be locks or strongboxes so devised as to look like something else, from goblets to statues to chairs. The larger items include a mechanical scribe, a steam dragon, a pump of Gond, an everlight, a fan chair, and a farseer. Unless one has been to the Hall, some or all of these items are undoubtedly unfamiliar, so I will attempt to describe them and their functions briefly A mechanical scribe is a handset type printing press. A steam dragon is a steam engine with fittings that render it capable of moving large objects along a continuous path by means of pulleys, of pumping water, of operating a lift up a cliff or wall by means of a continuous rope, of rowing a barge, and so on. A pump of Gond is a muscle-powered pump, worked by pedaling a flywheel, for use in farm irrigation and in filling bilges and reservoirs. An everlight is a system of self-filling oil lamps fed from a central oil tank. A fan chair is an adjustable reclining chair that can be rocked, operating a fan to cool the sitter. And, finally, a farseer is a seeing glass with a series of tinted and graduated glass lenses that enable it to be used for viewing tiny things up close, viewing sights as far away as the horizon, or focusing the heat of the sun so as to ignite or melt things.

The visitor will be left alone to marvel over such things. Unless one tries to damage, move, or tamper with a



device, or states a clear and serious intent to purchase, the priests are far too busy fending off ever-present, awe-eyed gnomes—who travel to the Hall daily to gawk tirelessly at the wonders there—to speak to visitors.

#### The Prices

The rating of the Hall refers to its entrance fee only. The prices charged for the replicas are another matter altogether. The devices on display in the main Hall are the work of priests, who duplicated original prototypes, and the originals aren't for sale under any circumstances. The prices of replicas for sale are currently as follows:

**Locks:** 5 gp to 50 gp, depending on difficulty of breaking or picking, and what they're hidden in or shaped as.

**Strongboxes:** 10 gp to 60 gp, for the same reasons.

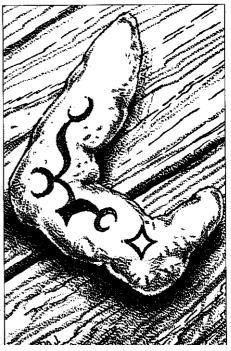
**Fan Chair:** 50 gp to 300 gp, depending on design, size, and finish. Fan chairs are much in demand among nobles and the rich all over Faerûn during the warmer months.

**Mechanical Scribe:** 750 gp. **Steam Dragon:** 9,000 gp (fittings 1,000 gp extra, each).

Steam Dragonet (small version of the Steam Dragon): 4,500 gp (fittings 500 gp extra, each).

**Pump of Gond:** 200 gp. **Everlight:** 400 gp for two lamps, plus 50 gp per additional lamp thereafter.

Farseer: 250 gp.



Ward of the Wonderbringer Token

The Hall also sells fine parchment in blank rolled scrolls (10 gp each) and in sheets 4 handwidths across by 10 in length (1 gp each). Those willing to wait a tenday after ordering (and prepaying!) can have a bound book of 50 parchment sheets for 100 gp. Books with gilded edges, with latches, or of different sizes take longer and cost more.

### Travelers' Lore

The temple is guarded by the magic of its watchpriests, by the stone gargoyle<sup>1</sup> adorning the roof, and by the ward tokens of the temple. All priests and persons authorized to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>These gargoyles are neutral-aligned beings created by, and absolutely loyal to, the High Artificer of the temple. In all other ways, they are identical to the monsters widely feared by adventurers.





enter the Hall bear ward tokens. They are necessary to avoid triggering the alarm and deadly defensive spells that guard the storage cellars of the Hall, the chains connecting each item on display in the main floor and balconies of the Hall to floor rings, and all parts of the temple across the road except the public worship areas. The faithful of Gond can protect both themselves and the consecrated areas from thieves, religious rivals, and other undesired intruders by touching a ward token to the body of such an undesirable while whispering or con-

centrating on the words of Gond.2

The High Artificer or other High Initiates of the Mysteries of Gond can cause a stolen ward token to explode from any distance, so long as its *precise* location is known or learned—by scrying or other magics, for instance. Activated ward tokens of Gond unleash—while within the High House or the Hall of Wonders only!—an electrical discharge akin to a *lightning bolt*. Certain doorways, window ledges, floors, and other strategic areas in the Hall unleash similar effects if entered by someone *without* a ward token.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The "words of Gond" used to activate a token are a secret phrase. Priests of 6th level or greater need not speak it aloud. A successful attack roll is required to touch a mobile hostile being with a ward token. A ward token dis charge deals a target 4d6 points of damage per round, and a token can be used as often as desired, once per round. Clergy of Gond who are specialty priests of any level, or clerics of 8th level or higher, are taught a phrase that causes a ward token to activate when it is outside areas consecrated to Gond. A ward token can only be activated on nonconsecrated ground three times (one round equals one activation) before it is destroyed. When commanded to destroy itself, a ward token blasts apart with effects identical to a *chain lightning* spell.



### Elfsong Tavern

Tavern

### !!!! 0000

This tavern is the local watering hole, meeting place, and hiring fair for adventurers. A popular destination for pirates and outlaws on the loose in the Coast lands, it is a place the watch turns a blind eye toward, unless rowdiness and battle erupt. Those wishing to fence stolen goods, hire unusual folk for unrespectable tasks, and hear tall tales of daring adventure often come here and stay late.

### The Place

Decorated by a stuffed baby beholder over the bar (the smallest eye tyrant I've ever seen—not that I've seen man. I'll grant), this place is dimly lit by many wandering, blue-hued driftglobes, and is furnished with many stout, knifescarred wooden chairs and tables, curtained off with tapestries that provide privacy. Gossips should beware, as this is visual privacy only.) The ground floor is devoted to a taproom that serves melted cheese sandwiches (spiced or unspiced, as you prefer), pickles, and fist-sized twists of dried herring-and drinks, of course. As you might guess, all the food is highly salted to make you drink more.

Several dark, twisting stairs lead up to private meeting rooms that can be rented by the candle (the time it takes a short taper to burn down) or an evening. Those with enemies are warned that the dimness on the stairs has concealed many a seeking knife thrust or poisoned hand crossbow bolt.

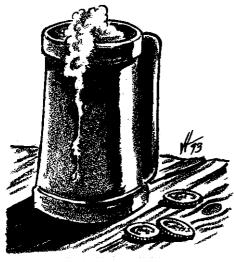
### The Prospect

This tayern is named for an unusual haunting—a ghostly female elven voice, heard from time to time<sup>3</sup> all over the establishment. It isn't loud, but can be heard clearly everywhere, and is both beautiful and achingly mournful. It often moves hardened soldiers, who can't understand a word of the archaic elven tongue used, to tears. Some, even though they have to drink away the melancholy it brings, come here solely in hopes of hearing it. The deaf and the insensitive are warned that anyone who talks, sings, or makes undue noise during the customary hush that falls over the tavern while the ghostly voice sings her sad lament is liable to be struck down with deadly speed by the nearest regular patron. Elves hearing the song for the first time are often stunned. By tradition, they are silently served a free tallglass of elverquisst by the bartender.

A first-timer of any race and either sex who breaks down into tears upon hearing the song is usually embraced and comforted by the nearest regular patron. After hearing the song, the current owner of the tavern, the half-elven maid "Lady" Alyth Elendara, bought the place for 50,000 gp from an aging warrior who placed only one condition on the sale: that he be allowed to sit in the tavern all the night hours so that he could hear the haunting song as often as he desired. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The voice is never heard more than twice in an evening, but usually at least every three nights, and never during the sunlit hours.





bargain was met, although the old man has since died. No one is sure just who the elven singer is—although it's clear she's singing a lament for a lover lost at sea—or how the haunting came to be. Some sporadic attempts by various clergy to banish the phenomenon have failed—and anyone foolish enough to try an exorcism today is likely to make the sudden sharp acquaintance of a bristling roomful of sailors' blades.

Patrons can—and are expected to—go armed when in the Elfsong, and the known rule is that all beings need to protect their own backs except when the sad lady's singing. By tradition, music of any sort is not sung or played in the tavern. The ghostly lady has the entertainment to herself.

### The Provender

The fare, as aforementioned, is simple—open-faced malt bread and melted cheese sandwiches, sprinkled with dill, nutmeg, or powdered spices of your choice; whole pickles (heavy on the

garlic); and handful-sized chunks of pressed, dried salt herring. Lady Alyth also makes a thick stew that is beloved by many sick or chilled sailors. She keeps a cauldron on simmer all the time and throws all the food leavings into it, boils beef bones and assorted shellfish in it, and pours in all the wine dregs and soured ale. Some folk in Baldur's Gate swear by it, and visit the Elfsong just to drink a mug or bowl when they'd otherwise never enter a place where such rough and rowdy lowlifes drink.

#### The Prices

Ale is 2 cp per tankard (large, battered pewter things, not meager cups), stout is 4 cp per tankard, and all wine (a small and anonymous selection is offered) is 5 cp per tallglass. Rollrum (dark, licorice-laced drink from the Tashalar, with a cool, minty aftertaste) is 1 sp per flagon, and is an acquired taste—one that most seafaring patrons seem to have acquired quite well, thank ye.

All servings of provender are 1 sp, except stew. This price only covers a mug of stew. A large bowl is 2 cp extra. Most patrons will find a serving of something is about half a meal.

### Travelers' Lore

Lady Alyth operates an unofficial bank for her patrons. Those who use this service are mainly sailors dabbling in shady business who've no safe place to hide their takings and no good reason for having made so much coin. Rumors abound of many wildly different places she hides the money and the ways she guards it, but inquiries on this topic are not welcome.



### The Blade and Stars

Inn

iii baa

This inn is named for its enchanted sign-board, looted from a ruined village in Amn after a long-ago trade war. It's a large black sign displaying a curved saber held by a delicate, longfingered female human hand. The sign is enspelled so that stars wink and slowly drift around the blade over the dark surface. The inn itself is less exciting, but still a good, safe, clean, pleasant place to stay

### The Place

The Blade is a long, tall building with attached stables and kitchens on one side and balconies opening out of upper rooms on the other. It rises four floors above the street, and its furnishings are clean and fairly new. There's a small lounge off the front lobby for guests to meet citizens in, but it lacks a table.

### The Prospect

Service in the Blade is curt but swift Vigilant stairwatchers on staff keep track of guests' comings and goings, discouraging street thieves and even dopplegangers, who are a growing though unreported problem in cities all over Faerûn. Your stay is apt to be quiet and unremarkable, unless your demeanor makes it otherwise. Rowdy or reckless guests are firmly warned, once—and if something else happens, firmly asked to leave.

### The Provender

Meals are served in guests' rooms rather than in a dining room, so the fare is never better than lukewarm—but as it's



simple ale, bread, and fish, this is little loss. Bread can be ordered spread with herbed cheese or melted eggs (both surprisingly good). On cold nights, the proprietor, Aundegul Shawn, serves ruby cordial on request—a sweet, syrupy concoction of cherries dissolved in sugared red wine. It's nice, once you're used to the rawness it leaves in the throat.

### The Prices

Rooms, including bath, stabling and meals, are 3 gp per night. A guest can order three servings of food a day, but it's always the same repast Cordial is 4 cp per goblet. Ale is 3 cp per tankard. One tankard of ale is free with each meal, and a guest can purchase two extra a day—those requesting more will be told to find a tavern.

### Travelers' Lore

Local legend says a female yuan-ti is walled up in the inn, frozen in midbattle by a desperate (and long-gone) wizards spell. When he dies, she'll be released.



# The Blushing Mermaid

Inn/Tavern



The Mermaid is known up and down the Coast lands as a meeting place in which to conduct illicit business for folk who are dangerous or criminals. It is a noisy, brawling establishment. I can recommend it only to those who go well armed, know how to use their weapons, and bring lots of loyal friends with similar skills.

#### The Place

The Mermaid is a long, low, ramshackle place with a confusing maze of wings, outbuildings, stockaded enclosures, and stables surrounding it on three sides—the better to give cover to those trying to approach or leave unseen, most Baldurians say. It has at least four levels of cellars—many more, some say—and rumors abound of secret passages, or even connections to an underground stream or sewer connecting with the harbor.

Rooms at the Mermaid are low-ceilinged, dingy, and apt to be furnished with mismatched pieces that have seen better days. In general, they are loot-and-salvage pieces that have seen heavy use since their installation here. The overall effect is of a rather dangerous but endearingly cluttered cellar, decorated with the flotsam of a hundred shipwrecks.

The Mermaid is apt to be noisy throughout the night. Those who

aren't sound sleepers are advised to seek lodgings elsewhere. All rooms have iron bar shutters—if they have windows at all—and heavy wooden beam double bars on the inside. They're there to be used, folks.

The lobby is the only highceilinged room in the place, except the stairwell to the two upper floors. A life-size and crudely carved wooden mermaid hangs overhead above the reception desk. The nearly nude mermaid's body is covered with a score or more shriveled and blackened severed hands. If asked about them, the staff will smile and tell you that they were - er, donated by folks who forgot to pay their bills. 4 The desk has its own trophy a huge broad axe buried deep in the wood. Be warned that the axe can easily be snatched up out of the deep cleft it caused long ago and hurled with speed and accuracy across the lobby by the balding, bearded, hairy-armed clerk who looks like a walking cask!

## The Prospect

The visitor will find in the Mermaid an astonishing collection of smooth-tongued, scarred old sea dogs nursing drinks at all hours. Each one is a contact person for this or that cabal, thieving brotherhood, smuggler, mercenary band, fence, panderer, or other shady professional interest. Negotiations with such contacts usually consist of a nasty grin and a case

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster warns that these hands are actually animated crawling claws under the command of the desk clerk. They will fall, leap, bound, and scuttle around the lobby at his direction to battle the watch, intruders, or obstreperous guests.



of temporary deafness until at least a silver piece is given them-whereupon they recall their voice, hearing, and manners, and inquire as to your own fortune. If pleasantries proceed as far as your requesting a need or desire for something or someone, the sea dog will examine the ceiling, tell it how much such information is likely to cost (1 to 5 gp, usually 2 gp), and slide over his empty tankard for payment. Once he's satisfied the coins you've dropped into it are of good quality, he'll tell you what you want to know and arrange a meeting, or send you to a contact who can. I report all this secondhand, of course!

A stay at the Mermaid is apt to be quite safe, so long as one avoids battle and does nothing overly insulting or stupid. (Some sharp-tongued killers like to taunt and goad other guests to see if they can get a fight out of them.) The proprietors, who are unknown and never seen, have instructed their staff to make the House a relatively safe, neutral ground for all patrons, whatever their race, past, or profession. It's better for business that way.

#### The Provender

Meals at the Mermaid are of two sorts: elaborate food, brought in to order from nearby eateries, and food prepared on the premises. The brought-in food is usually good and of generous portions, but not overly warm by the time it reaches you. The fare prepared at the Mermaid is of the simple but good and filling variety, except for a truly vile salted small-

fish stew. This stew consists of various rotting baitfish boiled with sea salt and seaweed, and even *smells* disgusting. Many sailors order only bread spread with drippings (crusty nutbread rolls with thick organ meat gravy ladled over them) or handwheels of cheese, but the Mermaid's kitchen also produces a splendid pork, thyme, and mushroom platter.

The most commonly ordered meal is ale, bread, and fish. Some patrons also like small squid pickled in vinegar, which I find revolting from three rooms away!

Sailors have prodigious appetites. It's not uncommon to look across the dining room at the Mermaid and *not* see several diners. They're entirely hidden by the roasts set in front of them!

Whole roast pigs are another favorite dish. It seems most seafolk are sick of marine edibles by the time they reach land, but land-treading travelers and sailors long ashore often order literal heaps of oysters, clams, or mussels and attack them with a knife. Hairy-chested men (those foolish enough to risk diseases and parasites) often eat the shellfish raw—and a crazed few like to shell them alive from a saltwater basin and devour them still squirming!

I managed to get a single (thankfully more widely appealing in nature) recipe from the cooks, as is shown on the scrap on the following page.

Beer at the Mermaid is sea ale (thicker and more bitter than most tongues find enjoyable), stout, and a light, golden-hued lager from



## Flounder

Flay off the fish skins, pick out all the scales that remain, and lay the edible portions in vinegar.

Set on the fire a pot of red wine, into which add a handful each of crushed garlic, salt, and dragonseye, a pinch of tansy, and other herbs as desired. Stint not, for much savor is lost in the boiling.

When the pot is at a rolling boil, take the fish from the vinegar, the largest first, and place them in the pot. Take out with tongs when the flesh of the fish rises into bubbles, for then it is done.

While the fish boil, prepare ye a melt skillet of butter, into which stir sliced and powdered nuts, fruit peel, and paraley to taste.

When the fish has drained, place a portion on a serving platter, and pour the melted butter over it. Serve within a ring of shelled oysters and chips of cheese.

Mintarn. No wines are available, but one can get whisky strong and smoky enough to strip paint or tar from wood. It brings tears to the eyes of most who drink it, and probably worse things to their insides!

### The Prices

Rooms are 2 gp per night, stabling included. Food for mounts is an extra 3 cp each. No tenday room rate or bathing facilities are available.

All food and drink is extra. A platter of fish, bread, and drippings is 2 cp, and meat dishes are all 3 cp per plat-

ter. Heaps of shellfish are 1 gp per serving, and whole roasts are 3 gp each. Ale is 3 cp per tankard, and whisky is 1 sp per tallglass (with no larger measure prices).

## Travelers' Lore

Predictably, fourscore tales of treachery, hidden treasure, secret passages, and trapped chests swirl around the Mermaid. It's impossible to tell how many are pure fabrication or have grown wildly in the telling. Stolen or illegal items are definitely hidden quickly and well here for a fee.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster says people—willingly or unwillingly—can also be hidden, Hidden rooms cost twice what regular rooms do, are windowless and buried deep to keep sounds to a minimum and discourage escape attempts, and come with manacles (if ordered). Gags, "hoods" (solid-face metal helms), and double forearm-and-finger clamps can be ordered if one wishes to confine a wizard. Elminster doesn't recommend the practice.



## The Helm and Cloak

Inn/Feast House

iiii baaa

This grand inn, rooming house, and feasting house is favored by those who've lots of coins to spare—both citizens of the Gate, who enjoy the dining room, and travelers. There's even a floor of long-term rental rooms. Most of these are currently occupied by members of the Knights of the Unicorn, romantic adventurers described by a regular patron as elegant buffoons.

The Helm is the fashionable place to dine and chat, much favored by those of power. Many an important business deal or alliance has been negotiated in its luxurious alcoves. The Helm avoids the haughty and gaudy unerringly choosing the best of informal good taste, traditional furnishings, and thoughtful service, such as a warmed robe and slippers brought to your room when you're heard to rise in the morn.

#### The Place

The Helm is actually two connected buildings. The smaller is an old house fronting on Windspell Street at the crossroads facing the Ducal Palace. The larger structure is an old rooming house that faces the High House of Wonders. A tattered cloak hangs displayed over the old rooming house's raised porch, whereas a gigantic helm—once worn by a titan, senior staff tell guests who ask, albeit





dryly—overhangs the Windspell Street doors.

#### The Provender

Food at the Helm means jellied eels, fresh fish in hot lemon sauce, glazed and stuffed fowl, and fried and candied meats. The fried onion-and-spiced-tubers stuffing is especially delectable. It's all cooked in wine, served by the platter, and is uniformly fine.

The wine cellar is huge in both amount and variety. Those with a taste for Saerloonian glowfire are warned that the resident Knights are apt to order entire barrels of the stuff up to their rooms of evenings. Ask early to make sure there's enough for your glass.

There's also mead (very ordinary) and cinnamon-spiced milk available (hot or cold, as you prefer), but no beer of any sort to be had. "We're *not* running a tavern, m'lord," one of the senior servants said to me, when I inquired why.

#### The Prices

Mead and milk are 5 cp per glass, and wine is 3 gp per tallglass, 10 gp per great goblet (a huge silver flagon that holds about a bottle), or 25 gp per hand cask. The Knights pay 50 gp per barrel, but anyone else trying to order such a large container will be told that only long-term residents are allowed to place such demands on the cellar. All platters are 10 gp. Rooms are 17 gp to 25 gp per night,

depending on size and location. The room fee includes a hot bath, a cloth-mending and dressing service, and as much mint water as desired.

Stabling is extra, and costs 3 gp per night per animal—but the hostlers are among the finest in Faerûn, able to spot and treat injuries and conditions, and attentive to a beast's every want. Think of it as a luxury stay for your mount when you pay for it, and the coins leave your hand more easily. Of course, you wouldn't be here at all if you didn't have the shining metal to spare.

#### Travelers' Lore

The house part of the Helm was once the home of a priestess of Sune, and its ceiling paintings of scenes of unbridled pleasure and passion have raised more than a few eyebrows. These paintings still cause lamps to be lifted today by those who'd like to get a better look—so as to elevate their brows farther. There are persistent rumors of elegantly furnished garret chambers reached by secret passages, but the staff refuses to answer queries on this subject.

It is true that the staff has quickly hidden notorious guests on several occasions—guests that in some cases were never seen again. The rooming house part of the Helm has some treasure rumors, too (the hidden loot of retired pirates, of course).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster hinted slyly that the hidden chambers sport some magical tapestries, containing gates leading to (unknown) places elsewhere in Faerûn.



# Three Old Kegs

Inn

iii aaaa

This cozy timber-and-stone inn has three old kegs hanging from a roofpole on chains rather than a signboard. Those bold or whimsical enough to enter in and stay will find one of the best inns in all Faerûn. Everything is comfortable and a little shabby, but the staff is quietly friendly. Patrons are encouraged to take their ease all over the ground floor and the one above. It feels like you're at home—assuming, of course, your home is a place where you can read or snooze at will, feet up on cushions as you lounge about in comfy old chairs and couches: Bliss!

### The Place

The Kegs has two levels of fieldstone cellars and two fieldstone floors above them. The uppermost cellar is given over to gaming rooms and connected to the ground floor by no fewer than three open staircases. The two uppermost floors (for six total floors) are timber, topped with a slate roof. All floors of the place are connected in one corner by a dumbwaiter shaft large enough for two folk pressed together to stand on the platform and ride up and down by pulling on the draw rope. This is much used by servants for quick travel up and down-and occasionally by patrons for pranks and quick exits. On at least one occasion, it has been used for murder: A patron in an upper room was noosed by a foe and

then hurled down the shaft! Tales are told of the apparition of his hanged, dangling body, face a bare skull, being seen in the shaft late on dark nights—but such tales are usually told by those who've had a bit too much to drink.

#### The Prospect

The Kegs is a cozy place, furnished with old furniture from a dozen keeps and many simpler homes. The dusty heads of trophy elk and creatures of the deep hang on the walls, crowding for space amid old and faded paintings of elven hunts and human knights battling dragons and each other, or courting various maidens. Where there aren't paintings, there are bookshelves crammed with old diaries, travel books, collections of ballads and legends, and grand and overblown histories of heroes.

Regular patrons snooze and read the days away, rousing themselves from time to time for a glass of wine, mug of broth, or a game of dice, cards, or shove-skittles. Both the wine and the broth are excellent, but they, along with ice water and dark and nutty malt bread, are the only fare to be had in the place.

The thick beastskin rugs, paneling, books, and tapestries absorb sound. The Kegs is a quiet place. Come here for a reasonable and comfortable rest, a haven against the bustle of business or adventure.

Patrons are asked to keep their weapons in their rooms, and not to bring drinkables in with them—inside or outside their bodies.





Ithtyl Calantryn

Drunks often awaken in the morning to find themselves sleeping out back in the hay pile by the kitchen door.

The innkeeper is a tall, quiet man with a mane of long, curly black hair and a sword scar that runs from his nose diagonally across one cheek. His name is Nantrin Bellowglyn, and he's a Tethyrian noble's retired guard who fled that land when its civil strife erupted and his lord was slain. He has a staff of four daughters and hired help: a bags boy, a hostler, and three serving wenches. These wenches were huntresses in Tethyr, and at least one of them, Ithtyl Calantryn, is a sorceress expert in levitation and shielding spells. On more

than one occasion, I'm told, she's calmly hurled would-be thieves and troublesome brawling patrons bodily out of the inn—sometimes by way of a third floor window.

#### The Provender

As I have said, the Kegs serves simple fare. Most folk go elsewhere for main meals.

#### The Prices

A stay at the Kegs costs you 5 sp per night per person, stabling included. Rooms for up to four folk are available, but there's no discount for sharing a room. A plate of bread and as much ice water as one wants are included. More food and drink costs an extra 1 cp per plate, and all extra wine is 6 cp per tallglass. The only other extra charge is for hot baths (3 cp per person). Cold baths and laundry service are included in room rates.

## Travelers' Lore

The Kegs is said to contain a secret passage linking it with a dockside warehouse and a sewer shaft that comes to the surface near the Black Dragon Gate. Somewhere along this passage is a lime pit where folk can quietly dispose of bodies (100 gp per corpse) by arrangement with someone who can be contacted through Nantrin. Adventurers and pokersabout-after-secrets had best not get on the bad side of Nantrin, it is rumored, or they may find themselves "searching the pit while asleep," as it were.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster smiled and said that someone was Nantrin himself, of course.



# Benegost

Tired travelers on the Coast Way between Baldur's Gate and Amn often stop in Beregost. Beregost is located just off the road about a day's travel on horseback south of where the Way of the Lion that leads to Candlekeep branches off from the Coast Way. It's within reach of the northern borders of Amn. Merchants of that land often use it as a rendezvous for caravan assembly before attempting the perilous overland runs north to Waterdeep or east to the Sea of Fallen Stars. As a result, this small town gets very crowded at unpredictable intervals.

Begun as a farming village under the protection of a school of wizardry, Beregost is now dominated by the Song of the Morning, a major temple to Lathander. The mage Ulcaster, a conjurer of note, founded his school over 300 years ago-but grew too successful, attracting would—be wizards from all over the Sword Coast. Calishite mages came to fear the school's power and destroyed it in spell battle, though Ulcaster himself disappeared during the fray and was never found. The school burned to an empty shell, which still stands on a hill east of the town. Local fear of the ruins, which are said to be haunted by phantoms who are still able to cast spells, has caused Beregost to be expanded to the west of the Coast Way road, leaving the hills east of it to the sheep.

Beregost has only one tavern. It is called the Burning Wizard, of course. It has no signboard, but the traveler can easily find it. It's the building with

the crowded hitching rail that stands just north of where the small rivulet known as Wizards' Doom Creekwhich rises on the hill where the ruins stand against the sky-crosses the Coast Way. That's where I heard of the two chief dangers to the curious and to young magelings hoping to gain spells or items who approach the ruins too closely. There's a wizshade who hurls random spells at folk, sometimes appearing as a thin, wraithlike, impossibly tall, bearded man and sometimes just as a battered wizard's hat. There's also another wizard wraith—a haunt—who tries to lure folk into the depths of the ruin's cellars and possess their bodies. Old villagers also speak of magical traps deep in the ruins and at least one gate that leads to unknown destinations. This last claim has been confirmed as truth by no less a pair of magical personages than the Lord Mage of Waterdeep, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, and Elminster of Shadowdale.

Beregost's governor strongly disapproves of explorations of the ruins. Although there is a five-person town council, the governor's word is law in Beregost, and he is a tireless proponent of farming, starting up new businesses, and improving the place. He is also Most Radiant of Lathander (high priest of the temple) Kelddath Ormlyr, and his temple troops police the town, keeping it safe so that trading, meetings, and spending at the shops are brisk. In this, he has two powerful allies: the wizard Thalantyr, a conjurer of great repute who unfortunately wasn't at home when I visited,



and the smith Taerom "Thunderhammer" Fuiruim. Kelddath has also successfully encouraged several important Amnian merchants to establish estates around Beregost—notably the Craumerdaun family, whose fine horses (now bred here) are highly prized in Amn and Tethyr.

The visitor today will find the following local features of note.

## Places of Interest in Beregost Temples

#### The Song of the Morning

This large temple to Lathander consists of a fortified church surrounded by stables, refectories, guesthouses, and outbuildings. It rises up right beside the east side of the road in the center of town, and its distinctive rose-red spires can be seen for miles. Its many clergy and 200 lay-member militia assist local businesspeople and farmers, and in return the temple receives regular and large offerings.

The servants of the Morninglord also tend temple fields of potatoes and herb flowers east of the road, and keep sheep on the slopes of the hill topped by the ruined school of wizardry. They keep them there ostensibly because these fields are more open to view than those of local farmers. The sheep are thus more easily watched, preventing theft and raiding beasts from ravaging them. The real reason that the sheep are kept here is that the servants of the Morninglord want to

keep some control over expeditions into the ruins and to prevent uncontrolled expansion of Beregost. (Over the years, various Amnian merchants have shown a distressing tendency to lay claim to all land within easy reach of the Coast Way that's not strongly defended.)

The folk of the temple are vigilant, and stand for no lawlessness or aggression, but are otherwise helpful to strangers. Those willing to give 20 gp or more to the temple are welcome to stay in its guesthouses for two nights. People may stay longer if they are sick or injured. Priests will tend them and won't expect any more money, although most folk do give something. Temple fare is simple but good, and baths and stabling are available.

## Homes High Hedge

Northwest of the main settlement of Beregost stands High Hedge, the estate of Thalantyr the Conjurer. It is guarded by a fiercely loyal mated pair of griffons and by some sort of invisible servant creature that has been known to spy and deliver things for its master right into town. Thalantyr is a courtly man who can sometimes be seen walking about the countryside, his long, black staff in hand. He's had no apprentices for years and doesn't welcome visitors. Locals say he's interested in far-off places and things, and is sometimes absent for long periods.

Those who've seen his abode say that it's a dark, turreted stone house



overgrown with pines and that he has his own fishpond behind it. Sometimes he sits next to the pond and talks with something that stays just under the surface of the water.

## Shops

Thunderhammer Smithy

Armor Maker and Weaponsmith

\* \* \* \*

Taerom "Thunderhammer" Fuiruim is a burly giant. His chestnut hair and mutton-chop whiskers are now shot through with gray and white, but his huge hands remain strong and deft. He is a master armorer, and his warmongery equals the best in Faerûn. On several occasions he's made items for Thalantyr to enspell, and even dwarf smiths admire his work.

Taerom keeps over a dozen apprentices busy with all the orders that come his way (mainly from Amn). He fights with a huge iron staff and has been known to slay orcs with a single blow, but is generally a quiet man. He is not given to leadership, but is respected in town more than anyone else.

# Taverns The Burning Wizard

iii dod

This tavern is a bustling place, as favored by the locals as by visitors. Acolytes of Lathander are trained to keep lively conversations and entertainments going here, and even to gamble. (Any takings are donated to the temple, of course.) Traveling minstrels are always welcomed, stay for

free, and are paid 5 gp per night atop that. No food is sold at the Wizard, but all three local inns keep runners here to go and fetch hot covered platters from the kitchens of their establishments. In winter, don't expect the food to arrive very warm! This is a good little place, with several small rooms to stay in adorned with donated bric-abrac from loyal regulars. It's a delight to find enough cushions in a room to let one sit up in bed in comfort!

#### lnns

Feldepost's Inn

iii baak

Named for its now-deceased founder, this is an old and comfortable place. Service is careful and kindly, if a trifle slow, but a room comes with a fire alight (except in hot weather), and a bath that is skillfully filled to one's own taste in warmth by several old men of many smiles but few words. One can even request assistance bathing. All this makes the place a favorite with the elderly, and so makes for a quiet stay.

The food is superior. Don't miss the cheese and cucumber buns, or the onion and mushroom fireside tarts served to all by the hearth in the evenings. (The tarts are free if you're ordering drinks.) The inn cellar includes an excellent sherry.

#### The Red Sheaf

iii aaa

Folk come to the Sheaf for fast service. This inn prides itself on getting





you to your room or to a board in the dining room as fast as possible. If the weather is cold or wet, you'll find yourself in a warm house robe before a crackling fire just as quickly, with your wet things taken to the warming room behind the kitchen chimneys to dry on warmed stone shelves.

Fare at the Sheaf is of the warm or cold soups, cheese and grapes, bread and spreads, and whole roasts variety. The cold potato soup is delightful, and carries the homey taste of onion and celery, along with a more subtle and indefinable seasoning that I was unable to pin down. Unfortunately, the roasts are either blackened to crisp ashes or—on the other side, or deep inside—near raw. The cooks haven't mastered the slow fire yet,

only the too-hot, too-quick one.

This is Beregost's largest inn and is favored by merchants wanting to hold business meetings or sit in quiet. Those willing to part with 7 gp for an evening can rent private meeting rooms with doors that lock, though I suspect there are spyholes in the serving passage that runs behind them all. Entertainer folk—minstrels and such—aren't welcome at the Sheaf except as paying customers. The Sheaf provides no entertainment at all.

Local gossip whispers that a secret passage at the back of the inn leads down to an old smugglers' warehouse comprising caverns that were abandoned when drow tunneled up into the caverns from below. They had to be dealt with by Thalantyr, who left some sort of magical barrier.

## The Jovial Juggler



This inn is on the northern edge of town, on the west side of the road. Its huge roofboard depicting a laughing carnival juggler in jesterlike garb identifies it instantly from afar. It's very much an average roadhouse, but young Beregostans love it-it's their dancing and drinking club. It outpays Feldepost's for minstrels and other entertainers, and there's scarcely a night at the Juggler without some sort of loud revelry, complete with several oxen, hogs, and boars roasted whole. Thankfully, all of that's confined to one wing, so patrons do get some sleep!



## Bowshot

This hamlet stands on the western side of the Trade Way, a half-day's ride north of the Way Inn. Named because it was just a bowshot away from the Misty Forest, it's been a logging center for a hundred years—and it's been so successful that the forest is now miles away to the east.

Bowshot consists of the Bowshot Inn, a sawmill, six farms (two run by men who shoe horses as well as any smith), and almost a dozen home woodcarvers who turn out yokes, coffers, wheel spokes, tool handles, and whimsical carvings. The place deserves mention because of recently discovered caves beneath its western fringes. They are entered from the horse-well behind the inn, and by at least one cave mouth in the stands of trees north and west of the hamlet.

The Bowshot caverns show evidence of connections to deeper subterranean areas<sup>9</sup> and of past use by smugglers. Some stolen goods were recently recovered from the caves and returned to their rightful owners in Waterdeep. With them were crates of ore very rich in silver, presumably mined in the deeps below the caverns.

There's local talk of hiring or inducing an adventuring company to dwell in Bowshot and mount a constant guard over the cavern entrances—and even of founding a company to mine and smelt silver in the depths, its workers protected by

the hired adventurers. So far, no adventurers have agreed to such a defensive role. Many *have* come to the caverns and then moved on, talking of manspiders in the deep ways.

## Places of Interest in Bowshot Shops

Andalor's Mill

8 8

Ulmyn Andalor is an affable, portly man with a curly white beard and a bald pate who goes about covered with sawdust. He runs an always-busy mill that provides Waterdeep and Daggerford with cheap, plentiful green lumber. A copper piece will buy three posts as tall as an adult human male, or five 3-hand's-width boards of the same length.

#### lnns

The Bowshot Inn

111



This mediocre inn is a dim, chilly log structure that serves bad ale brought by the barrel from Waterdeep. The proprietor sells good hand crossbows for the traveler desiring self-protection and a little squirrel or fowl hunting. Eveningfeast here is usually a gummy stew made from those same squirrels or some wildfowl, and served with thick slices of adequate onion bread.

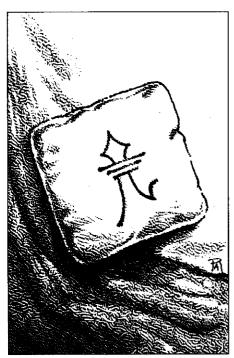
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Bowshot's location is shown on the map in the entry on the Way Inn, later in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>The existence of the caverns became widely known when a drow exploratory band emerged from the trees one night and ran straight into an encamped, but alert, armed caravan. At least two adventuring bands have descended into the far depths of the caverns and, thus far, have not returned.



# Candlekeep

This citadel of learning stands on a volcanic horn, or crag, overlooking the sea. It is a many-towered fortress. once the home of the famous seer Alaundo, and preserves his predictions along with all the written records and learning of the Realms that can be assembled. The price for any traveler to enter the Keep proper is a book. Those wishing to examine any writing in the Keep's library must gift Candlekeep with a new tome of no less than 10,000 gp value. The monks of Candlekeep (who claim to be nondenominational, and call themselves the Avowed) also purchase certain books brought to them and even com-



Inner Ward Token of Candlekeep

mission agents in great secrecy to procure writings they desire to possess. Those who wish to browse in the library must normally be sponsored by a known mage of power, so many books given to Candlekeep in payment are minor spellbooks.

This community is ruled by the Keeper of the Tomes, assisted by the First Reader (the second in authority and traditionally the most learned sage of the monastery). There are up to eight Great Readers under these two offices, who are assisted by the Chanter, the Guide, and the Gatewarden. The Chanter leads the endless chant of Alaundo's prophecies that wends its way around the citadel day and night in continuous utterance of the sage's predictions. He is spelled in this duty by three assistants, the Voices: the Voice of the North, the Voice of the East, and the Voice of the South. The Guide is in charge of teaching acolytes, and the Gatewarden deals with visitors, the security of and supplies for the community, and with the clergy, who are regarded as honored guests rather than part of the monastery's hierarchy.

The citadel bears mighty, many-layered wards that prevent anything from burning except wicks and wax, prevent the operation of teleportational magics and many other destructive spells, kill all molds and insects (such as paper wasps), prohibit the entry of bookworms, and have other, secret properties. Because of these wards candle lamps are often used, but no paper can ignite anywhere in the Keep. An additional ward, whose token



is shown at the far left, prohibits entry into the Inner Rooms except to those bearing a token. <sup>10</sup> The Inner Rooms are where the most powerful magical tomes are kept and where none but the Great Readers may go, except in the direct company of the Keeper or the First Reader.

The central, highest fortress of the Keep is surrounded by a terraced rock garden of many trees, where natural springs rise and bubble down the rocks in small cascades and pools. These beautiful grounds descend to a ring of buildings along the inside of the massive outer walls: guesthouses, stables, granaries, a warehouse, an infirmary, a temple to Oghma, and shrines to Deneir, Gond, and Milil.

Except in cases of illness or when someone joins the order as an acolyte, no visitor can remain in Candlekeep for more than 10 days at a time, or enter the monastery less than a month after leaving it. Order in the Keep is kept by the Gatewarden's five underofficers: four Watchers (who take turns patrolling the monastery and watching the land and sea around from its tallest towers) and the Keeper of the Portal (or gate guard), all five of whom have 12 armed monks (all experienced warriors) as assistants. These underofficers are also said to wield magical rods and rings to enforce their will.

Acolytes are robed in black. Seekers (full brothers) wear robes of mauve. The Seekers are the lowest monks.

They do research and fetch and carry. Above them are the Scribes, who copy out works to order or compile books from various sources in the library for sale—the chief source of income for the community. (Visitors are forbidden to write in the library.) Over them are the Chanter and the Readers, from whose ranks the offices of the Avowed are filled (and who vote to fill vacancies). All the underofficers wear brown homespun, while holders of the high offices wear robes of various colors that bear adornments of gold thread and stripes of white. Only the Keeper of the Tomes can wear robes all of white. Travelers who enter the Keep proper clad all in white can expect to be stripped on the spot or cast out.

The current Keeper of the Tomes is Ulraunt, a proud and haughty minor mage. It is well not to cross him. The traveler should humble himself to avoid doing so or try to keep out of the Keeper's notice. Unfortunately, all petitioners who enter the central Keep must sit at Ulraunt's left shoulder for at least one eveningfeast meal and endure his searching questions. The current First Reader, Tethtoril, is often mistaken by visitors for the Keeper because of his intelligent, regal, and sensitive demeanor. Ulraunt rather resents this.

Candlekeep has but one absolute rule: "Those who destroy knowledge, with ink, fire, or sword, are themselves destroyed." Here, books are more valuable than people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Tokens are built into the staves of office borne by the Keeper, the Gatewarden, and the First Reader. These are known as *glow staves* for their most-often-used power. If one fails to utter or think of a watchword when passing a ward boundary by means of a token, all bearers of other ward tokens are instantly made aware of the location of the ward breaching, regardless of where the other token bearers are on Faerûn.



# Daggerford

This self-styled city is really a town of about 300 folk that stands in the shadow of the castle of the Duke of Daggerford. Daggerford is named for a brave boy, Tyndal, sent ahead of his family wagon to find a place to ford the Shining River one evening some 400 summers ago. He was set upon by lizard men, and—armed only with a dagger—slew six of them and held off the rest until reinforcements arrived. The dukes of Daggerford claim direct descent from Tyndal, and their arms display a bloody silver dagger on a deep blue field.

The dukes of Daggerford claim all the lands from the estate of Floshin, south as far as the Dragonspear fields (the lands of Dragonspear Castle), east to the edge of the Misty Forest, and west to the verges of Lizard Marsh and the coast. They actually control far less-from about a halfday's ride north of Daggerford, where their forces meet up with road patrols from Waterdeep at a little pond called Waypost Water, east to the hills around the Laughing Hollow, and south to the hamlet of Bowshot. These lands take in about 20 farming hamlets. The ducal lands are home to about 1,000 folk in all.

The walled town is the largest stop on the Trade Way between Waterdeep and Soubar. Its largely wooden buildings huddle in the lee of a hill crowned by Daggerford Castle, which is surrounded by a grassy commons and guards a bridge across the Shining River. (The old ford's still there, beside the bridge.) It is home to human craftfolk, a few halflings, and a handful of folk of other races.

The townsfolk have a charter from the duke that allows their own Council of Guilds, a masked council styled after the Lords of Waterdeep, to govern the town. All able-bodied townsfolk must serve in the militia, although only a small number are normally on duty. They spend most of their time on road patrols, though a close watch is kept on Lizard Marsh.

Daggerford has temples to Chauntea and Lathander, and shrines to Tempus and Tyrnora. Chauntea's temple is called the Harvest House, and it is governed by Lady Priestess Merovyna. The temple of Lathander, Morninglow Tower, is under the supervision of Lightlord Liam Sunmist.

The Ford is a busy trading town, doing a lot of trade in horses, cattle, and repacking for merchants and drovers who don't wish to enter Waterdeep. Caravans are allowed to camp across the road from the town (next to the aromatic tannery), and most merchants going into town to escape the smells will find the town ordinary indeed. The most splendid building in town is undoubtedly the Guildmasters' Hall. It is surrounded by the no-nonsense homes and shops of folk who work

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Merovyna is a LG hf P8, who administers 14 priests and about 30 lay brothers.

Liam Sunmist is a LG hm P9. His temple stands beside the ducal castle, and the noble family are worshipers.

The shrine to Tempus, the Table of the Sword, is administered by a strict warrior from Waterdeep, Baergon Bluesword, CN hem F5/P5.

The shrine to Tymora, Fairfortune Hall, is run by Bando the Lame, a NG half-m P6.



hard every day Few seem to look for more in life than the next silver piece!

Carpenters work busily making chests and crates from lumber brought in from Bowshot, and no less than three smiths turn out everything from intricate locks to broad axes. There are several jewelers in town who can't hope to compete with the great cutters of Waterdeep, but will eagerly buy any decent stones they can get from passing merchants or adventurers.

The local militia, under the stone-faced Sherlen Spearslayer, is always hiring fighting folk, because their best swords are always being hired away by caravan masters, going off to the mercenary hiring fairs of Waterdeep, or trying their hands at adventuring. The militia is always busy patrolling the claimed ducal lands, and many youths and adventurers down on their luck have spent a season fighting brigands, lizard men, and the occasional predatory monster.

Daggerford is also home to a retired adventurer-mage, Delfen Yellowknife, who dwells in a tower on the town wall and always has at least a trio of apprentices. He's content to make a good living tutoring every wealthy Waterdhavian youngster who dreams of becoming a great mage.

The youthful duke, Pwyll Greatshout Daggerford, is seldom seen in town. He's either out hunting or in the castle planning how to defend the land he has and enrich his family and his people by shrewd investments. There are recurring plans to dredge the river and make Daggerford an important harbor, but I suspect the duke, like me, thinks there's no point in trying to compete with nearby Waterdeep.

A lot of travelers will probably stop in Daggerford at one time or another, using it as a base to explore Waterdeep from, so a few mentions of local establishments may prove useful. There's one tavern worthy of a visit, the Lady Luck, dealt with after the rest.

## Places of Interest in Daggerford Shops

Derval's Bright Blade Weaponsmith

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This smithy is the best of the three in town. The human smiths Cromach and Wayfel are the others. Cromach does serviceable work, but "as shaky as Wayfel's best" is a common local saying. The master smith at Derval's Bright Blade, Derval Ironeater, is the head of a respected local dwarf family that has done most of the building in stone around town. Derval claims to make the finest swords, axes, and spear blades from Waterdeep to Baldur's Gate, and his work is popular.

# Farrel's Fine Jewels and Apparel Exotic Fabrics and Jewelry

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This shop is the largest store in town. An outlet of a Waterdhavian trading company, it sells cotton, silk, rare furs, and thread imported from Calimshan, the Tashalar, and even more exotic regions—at prices even higher than



you'd pay for them in Waterdeep.

Farrel has an eye for matching hues and for resetting jewelry of dubious history. He buys and sells interesting gems and adornments of all sorts. His shop is worth a look if you're too rich to care what things cost.

# Korbus's Jewels and Fine Ornaments

Jeweler and Gem Appraiser

The front window of this small shop almost always displays its long-nosed, wheezing owner, the gnome jeweler Korbus Brightjewel, hard at work on small, exquisite pieces of jewelry. As good as any Waterdhavian or Calishite finecrafter, he's regularly visited by passing merchants eager to buy his latest earrings, pectorals, ornamental bracers, dangle garters, and jeweled belts and gloves. Locals say Korbus uses magic to give his work the striking beauty it has. He's expert at identi-



fying gems—even magical ones. The nobles of Waterdeep keep him busy with special orders for their ladies.

# Taverns The Happy Cow



This pleasant tavern stands just inside Daggerford's northern gate, the Farmers' Gate. It features blended beer made by the halfling owner, Fulbar Hardcheese, that tastes like almonds, and excellent sharpcrumble cheese (lovely crumbly white stuff—3 cp per handwheel) made on Fulbar's family farm. The Cow caters to farmers, who sit here nursing tankards at all hours. Locals say Fulbar is a rich and successful adventurer who retired here not long ago. Fulbar says nothing about his past.

#### River Shining Tavern



This tavern is exclusive indeed, with prices to outstrip most establishments in Waterdeep: Stout is 1 gp per tankard and wine as much as 10 gp per tall-glass! The duke and many traveling Waterdhavian nobles have been known to eat here, and the tavern's main hall serves as the meeting room of the Council of Guilds. By choice, some townsfolk only see the inside of the tavern when coming to Council meetings.

Run by the Delimbiyr family this establishment claims to be Daggerford's oldest tavern. It's also the closest thing in town to an inn—for a few noble patrons of the loftiest position and wealth.



## Lady Luck Tavern

Tavern

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This two-story former warehouse caters to soldiers and adventurers. Its proprietor, Owenden Orcslayer, is the son of a man who was given the warehouse as a reward for slaying orcs who'd killed the owners of the warehouse in a raid. It is a popular place for taletellers and funseekers alike. The preponderance of weapons in the hands of those who know how to use them makes for a relatively safe drinking spot, not a rough place.

#### The Place

Both levels of the warehouse have been opened up into a single lofty room, with balconies all around it at varying levels. Each balcony contains a booth for patrons and is linked to at least two other balconies by broad flights of stairs. The tipsy are advised to get down to street level before they become too drunk to safely do so. Every night someone falls or at least stumbles on the stairs.

In the center of the taproom is a massive stone pillar bearing the weight of the ceiling. It has a ladder of iron hooks up one side. It is used to display the battered shields, personal runes, or other mementos of patrons who've died in battle or disappeared while off adventuring or on a military mission. Any toast given in the tavern must include a salute to the pillar and the words: "To those who have fallen before us." Those

who brings in the relics of a fallen comrade are given a free drink of whatever they want.

The walls of the tavern are hung with weapons, armor, banners, spitted beast heads, and similar trophies of battle brought in by various patrons. The most striking of these is the huge, mummified wing of a black dragon slain in a volcano. The heat baked and dried its outstretched wing, and when an adventurer—the lone survivor of the party that slew it—dared to return to the lair nine vears later, he recovered not only the dragon's treasure hoard, but the wing. It now hangs over the taproom like a soft black canopy, depending from the ceiling on eight stout chains.

## The Prospect

This tavern is named for the goddess Tymora, patron of adventurers, and despite the memorial pillar, the expressed mood of patrons is always an enthusiastic "Dare everything!" and "Let's be adventuring, then!" The entire northeast wall of the taproom is covered by a huge, splendid color map of the Realms from Calimshan to the Spine of the World, and the Moonshaes to Raurin. News and rumors of treasure finds, dragon sightings, and possible treasures are eagerly discussed, as are tidings of war from anywhere in Faerûn.

## The Provender

The Lady serves salted nuts, cheese on hardbread, 12 and sugared bread-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>To us, hardbread is a rye cracker—or Scandinavian crispbread.





sticks. In winter, there's also stew made of beef, game, parsnips, and fish. It's thick, brown, greasy, and salty. If you're chilled, it warms you up, and that's about all the good I can muster to say of it.

That's all the food one can get, but most patrons come here because they're thirsty, not hungry. Accordingly, the Lady offers bitterroot beer (a smoky, acquired taste), zzar, sherry, and ale.

## The Prices

All the food is 3 cp per serving and comes on wooden platters. Hungry people will need two servings. Drink

is sold by the tankard or tallglass only, at Waterdhavian prices. <sup>13</sup> The wine list is meager, but from time to time merchants bring vintages from afar, and Owenden serves these wines as long as his stock holds out. These exotics often include rollrum (a dark, licorice-laced Tashlutan drink, which has a cool, clear, minty aftertaste), a favorite of many Sword Coast sailors.

#### Travelers' Lore

In the Lady, one drink always sits untouched on the bar. It's for Tymora herself, should she enter. Woe betide the visitor who touches this silver goblet-ejection and a heavy enforced offering at the shrine of Tymora (Fairfortune Hall) are the least penalty. Visitors who object to this are likely to find a yard of steel through their middles in short order. Six people have so died, and more than a dozen have made offeringsbut twice in Owenden's time, the goblet has been suddenly and silently wreathed in flame, and the wine within has vanished. Patrons believe Tymora herself drank with them.

At least two wizards have hidden coins or magic somewhere in the Lady and then gone adventuring—never to return. One was said to be an illusionist, and the other was a transmuter. A few people have tried to cast dispel magic on everyday tavern items on the theory that the treasure might be polymorphed or hidden by an illusion, thus far to no avail.

 $<sup>^{13}</sup>$ Use the prices given in *Volo's Guide to Waterdeep* under the Inn of the Dripping Dagger—or simplify to the following: ale, 1 cp/tankard; stout, 2 cp/tankard; mead, 3 cp; zzar, 6 cp; sherry, 7 cp; whiskey, 1 sp; and all wines, 1 sp/tallglass.



# The Friendly Arm

This walled hamlet located on the Coast Way several days north of Beregost consists of a stone keep (the inn) with stables, gardens, a horse pond, and caravan wagon sheds. It also features a few houses, a large meeting hall with a grand many-pillared entrance, and a temple to Garl Glittergold, chief god of the gnomes.

The Friendly Arm was once the hold of an evil priest of Bhaal who was destroyed in undead form by a band of adventurers led by the gnome thief and illusionist Bentley Mirrorshade. Bentley set his comrades-at-arms to work renovating the keep, and it soon opened as a fortified waystop on the Coast Way in territory often endangered by brigands and raiding bands of orcs, kobolds, bugbears, and even trolls. Though these perils have lessened somewhat since the Arm was founded, the safe, clean inn is still a favorite stop.

## Places of Interest in the Friendly Arm Temples

#### The Temple of Wisdom

This low building has interior walls studded with gems and gold nuggets. Guarded by many illusions, it is a temple to Garl Glittergold, primary deity of the gnomes. Human worshipers, some of whom have dubbed the place the Shrine of the Short, are welcomed here.

# INNS The Friendly Arm

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Inside the walls of the Friendly Arm, peace is maintained by a common agreement among guests that this be one of the rare neutral havens in the Realms, by the magic and adventuring help might Bentley can call on,14 and by a rumor that some of the fetching human barmaids are really iron golems concealed by powerful illusions! I was unable to test this belief beyond learning at least one serving wench at the Arm has a grip like iron—before she threw me back out of the bedroom she was tidying! (Perhaps the inn was named after her. She did help me up out of the ruins of the hall table afterward.)

The energetic, wise, and affable hosts of the Arm are Bentley and his wife Gellana, who presides over the temple. She wears a circlet of gems to signify her devotion to Garl Glittergold. The pair of them are kind, very perceptive, and could probably deal an Amnian merchant out of his last copper piece.

The house they keep has large, airy rooms, and good, simple food. Everything is clean, cheerful, and uncrowded, unless there's a meeting going on—for the Arm has become a favorite spot for business gatherings and neutral ground negotiations alike.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>There was a murder at the Arm recently, and the murderer was swiftly apprehended—with the magical aid of a mysterious cloaked man who some say was no less than Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, the Lord Mage of Water-deep! There have always been rumors that Bentley could call on folk from afar and that some sort of gate exists in or near the Arm—perhaps in the cellars of the old keep.



## Gillian's Hill

This hamlet stands on the east side of the Coast Way a half-day's ride south of Daggerford and about as long a ride from Liam's Hold. The community is named for a now-dead half-elven ranger of great beauty. Gillian Cantilar dwelt here in a long-vanished house atop a wooded knoll overlooking the road. Today, Gillian's Hill is a grass-girt mount topped by a covered fire cairn used as a signal beacon to warn Daggerford of approaching enemy armies—from Dragonspear Castle or the Serpent Hills, presumably.

Typical of a hundred or more small farming settlements in the Sword Coast region, Gillian's Hill wouldn't even be mentioned in this guide except for a surprisingly good shop there and a dungeon that has both lured many adventurers hither-and slain many. The dungeon seems to be a truly ancient human tomb-as old as Netheril, or older-where someone of magical power and political might was laid to rest. Just who was entombed here isn't clear. The tomb was pillaged long ago-from the Underdark beneath it! The location now serves as a spell-guarded entry to the Realms Below.

Unfortunately, those ancient and mighty binding spells originally set to stabilize and guard the tomb make it an ideal lair for creatures of the Underdark. About 20 winters ago, a band of illithids used it as a base from

which they stealthily stalked and raided passing caravan merchants, controlling the minds of unfortunate victims to make them lure many others to a mindless doom.

A brave band of adventurers defeated the mind flayers, but warned that the danger could well recur. It seems that an even greater evil has moved in: A Harper note was found recently on the slopes of the hill that said only: "Beware—Phaerimm! Spread the warning!" The writer of the note presumably perished beneath the hill, as no further news has come to light as to its authorship—or its subject.

From the surface, the tomb in the hill can only be entered by wandering about until one finds the precise location of one of several invisible portals—snatch gates that whisk any person or object entering them into the heart of the hill. Egress is by the same method, although the exit spots inside the tomb are apparently different sites than the entry or arrival locales, and hard to find.

Attempts to tunnel into the hill uncover stone walls that emit bolts of lightning<sup>16</sup> when exposed to air—bolts that continue to lash out until earth is thrown onto them, and they're covered again! This magical lightning can easily stab across the trade road, imperiling all passing traffic. Several mages of power have tried and failed to remove the spells that cause this deadly effect.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>The location of Gillian's Hill is shown on the map in the section on the Way Inn, later in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>These effects are like two bolts of *chain lightning*, each causing 12d6 points of damage per round, when one translates Elminster's description into AD&D\* game terms. He added the dry admonition, "Leave this alone, if ye have any sense—but (sigh), ye won't, will ye?"





## Places of Interest in Gillian's Hill Shops

Torleth's Treasures

Oddities, Curios, Antiques, and Junk

This shop is a large, ramshackle old barn that has been extended in random directions by diverse hands over many years so that its floor and roof change level often and alarmingly, and a forest of rough tree trunks studded with pegs that hold merchandise stand here, there, and everywhere holding the roof up. Customers can often be found wandering in bewilderment in the dimly lit aisles, searching for the way out.

Torleth Mindulspeer is a tall, cadaverously thin man of dry wit and a gloomy manner. He delights in buying old things, garbage out of ruins or abandoned buildings, and oddities dug up or brought back from the far corners of the Realms. Then he sells them to passersby.

Want a dancer's mask from the vanished realm of Valashar (now part of Tethyr)? A mirror that once hung in a Calishite harem—before someone put a magical painting of a slithering snake on it that circles the glass by itself, moving constantly? Some old rope, stained here and there with the blood of adventurers? Some dusty wine bottles from a shipwreck, terribly old but contents unknown? A book in a language nobody seems





able to read? A stuffed wyvern head with one tooth missing? Some old court clothes from Calimport? Torleth will sell them to you—for whatever low price you can both agree to shake hands on. It's a place some adventurers refuse to pass without striding in for just a quick look around—a look that can last all morning, of course.

On a recent visit, I found a scabbard that was once worn in Evermeet—now minus its gems and magic, of course, but still a splendid trophy. Thieves, bards, and actors get many of their costumes and props here, Torleth told me—and I believe him.

There's a tale told in Gillian's Hill-

among the stolid farmers, who lack an inn or tavern and gather of evenings when the weather's good in each other's orchards to smoke and share the contents of a keg rolled out of one of their cellars or bought from a caravan-of someone who found the crown of a barony in the Vilhon Reach lands in Torleth's and bought it for 33 pieces of gold! There's another about an artist's sketchbook that contained a powerful spell written in code and scattered in the illustrations throughout the pages that a sharpeyed wizard had for 11 gp. A third tale tells of a magical ring of resistance sold by Torleth for 4,000 gp that turned out to have several other powers, such as the ability to emit an invisible sword blade that could cut magical barriers and the means to let the wearer jump.

Such rings are called *Harvyn's* rings according to Elminster, after the mage who devised them. There are—as far as Harvyn's writings can be trusted—only six in existence, and their powers are considerable.<sup>17</sup>

Torleth also sells tents from armies that no longer exist, polearms gleaned from battlefields up and down the Coast, helms that fit giants and helms only a sprite could don, ship steering oars that are 50 feet long, teeth from dragons that aren't much shorter, stone lions and weirder beasts from half a hundred demolished mansions, fading coatsof-arms (on shields, wall bosses, and surcoats) of forgotten noble families, coracles, and more.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Details of this magical item, furnished by Elminster, appear in Appendix III of this guidebook.



# Julkoun

This village, once known as Shining, is upstream, or northeast, of the Laughing Hollow. It stands on the banks of the River Shining, or Delimbiyr. As it is located roughly halfway between the two, it looks to Daggerford and Secomber for supplies. However, it is home to farmers of independent mind.

Julkoun, for whom the village is now named, gave the hamlet of Shining new importance some 80 winters ago when he built a large stone mill and a shrine to Chauntea. Julkoun is long dead, but his gristmill is, still run by his descendants and has been joined by a clothyard mill that produces whole cloth for sale in Waterdeep or Amn.

This pastoral village of about 40 homes holds busy farmfolk, pleasant gardens, low stone-and-stump walls and hedgerows, and many strong manure smells. Its grassy streets are often full of grazing goats, sheep, and cattle. Julkoun is notable for an inn of surprising excellence and for some interesting local legends.

## Places of Interest in Julkoun Shops

Julkoun's Old Mill Flour Mill (Gristmill)

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This huge, impressive stone mill and warehouse grinds, stores, mixes, and bags hulled or crushed grain, flour, and seeds. It is always busy, and employs over 60 folk, almost all of them descendants of Julkoun. Cats, kept to keep down rodents, and small sling-wielding boys, whose job it is to drive off birds, are everywhere, and the mill always has enough output on hand to sell a traveler a belt sack or enough human-sized sacks to fill six wagons. The prices aren't below those elsewhere, but the product, carefully scrutinized by the mill staff, is "as good as Goldenfields"—and that's high praise from Amn northward.

The senior millers, Alaslagh Eljulkoun, Taunner Eljulkoun, and Irythyl Eljulkoun, sometimes buy nuts for blending, to make nut flour. Irythyl's dark eyes miss nothing, and local rumors whisper that she's a Harper.

#### Shining River Mill

Clothyard Mill



This barnlike wooden mill still looks new. Run by four millers for absentee Waterdhavian owners, it produces a coarse brown looseweave little better than homespun in appearance, but valued for its toughness, It's often used as the base material for sacks or tarpaulins that are made prettier and more watertight by a layer of finer material. The mill also produces a finer, smooth gray material known as shimmersteel for its overall hue and habit of catching the light. It is much favored in the Coast lands for use in cloaks and hoods.



Bolts of cloth come out of this mill. Although the millers will sell scraps to passersby, they're not tailors, and aren't interested in selling small cuts or amounts for the making of individual garments. Locals sometimes combine funds to buy and share a whole bolt of Shining River cloth.

## INNS The Jester's Pride

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This excellent inn is named for the Jester of Julkoun and is akin to a halfling hole or a druid's roothouse in appearance. It's dug out of a hill-side and planted over with a rock garden and rough stone walls. The roots of trees overhead curve across the

ceilings, and many little round windows let in the light to the south. Dwarves, gnomes, and halflings all feel at home here, and those who don't detest caves and damp, earthy smells should also enjoy the charming tile-floored passages, which jaunt up and down in gentle slopes. The cheery service and luxurious furnishings should delight anyone—my chamber had a copper tub set into the floor, with piped hot water!

The inn is run by the Yevershoulder halfling family, who have found no less than six delightfully impish—and breathtakingly beautiful! — half-elven ladies to serve at the inn as chambermaids. They all give as their name "Elsharee," and may in fact share that name for all I know. Some

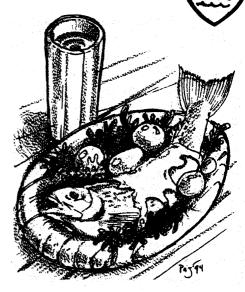


lonely merchants seem to arrange their travels up the Delimbiyr to include Julkoun just to see them—and I suspect that some of the odd folk I saw dropping by on several moonlit nights knew how to harp—if you catch my meaning—and were welcome here because of it.

The Jester's Pride underlies a wooded ridge that is surrounded by extensive herb and floral plantings. The ridge itself is crisscrossed by many meandering paths that link several little bowers with benches for guests to rest or relax in. By night, these sheltered garden refuges seem to find use both for romantic frolics and for somewhat shady business meetings full of code phrases, false names, and dangerous-sounding plans. Perhaps I was overhearing visiting adventurers—or perhaps there's more going on in Julkoun than one might think.

The Jester for whom the inn is named was a local thief-adventurer of mysterious powers. He seems to have been an acrobat of astonishing skill, and to have commanded exotic magics. He disappeared some 20 summers ago, presumably coming to a sticky end, but until then enjoyed a colorful career of robbing rich merchants, nobles, and wizards who came through the area—and surviving!

The Jester was a man of unusual height who hid his identity behind a jester's mask. The bells of his headgear were silent and were actually magical tokens of various sorts that afforded him lucky escapes on many occasions. Several of his victims



hunted him with ready spells or many swords or both, and he somehow outfaced them and sent them fleeing, their hireswords slain and their plans shattered. (Tales of the Jester's escapades come complete with furious debates as to whether he was really the god Mask, a dragon in human shape, a Master Harper, a deranged archmage, or a mighty being from another plane.)

The Jester vanished suddenly, leaving his lair—and whatever he'd managed to keep of the vast amounts of treasure he'd wrested from rightful owners—hidden. Unless someone's found it since (and no hint of this has found its way into the local tales of the Jester's daring), a king's treasury's worth of coins, gems, finery, and magic waits hidden somewhere near Julkoun. Some stories say the lair is elsewhere, reached via an invisible gate in midair above a local ruin or atop a local tor—an entrance revealed to an unintentional observer one



# four Daggers foul

Named because, lacking a spit, one can use four daggers, this method prepares a trio of goodsized groundfowl (or more, if the birds are small) for a hearty meal. Note the use of a trough This metal basin of the Sword Coast lands can be replaced by an inverted helm or shield on the trail (albeit clumsily), and is an innovation that more cooks in the Realms would do well to adopt. Take first at least three grouse, quail, or partridge. Cut off their necks, clean out their innards, and run them on a fair-sized spit. Submerge in a trough of old wine, port, or sherry. Put the necks in a small pot with water, a few grains of salt, and a few drops of wine, port, brandy, or sherry Lacking these, if you have beer, use only that and not salt nor water. Boil the fowl in the trough and the necks in their pot over a warm, not blazing, fire. Into the

pot, as it warms, put cloves and raisins or grapes that have withered bad, crushed almonds or walnuts, chopped ginger, and chopped onions (or better, leeks). When this reaches a rolling boil, cover and remove, and build up the fire.

Set the spit over the flames. Let the feathers flame and the skin blacken and crack. Thereafter, turn whenever the juice bubbles forth. To keep the fowl from drying out overmuch, baste them from the pot wherein the necks were boiled-or better, pour the pot out into a clean trough, and roll the sizzling spit in it from time to time, putting it back over the flames between. When first a wing or other part falls into the fire, fetch it out with a sword blade, tongs, or a flathnife server. The birds are then done. Remove them from the flames and eat them as soon as they are cool enough not to burn thy upper lip.

moonlit night by the Jester's use of it. Some say the invisible portal is reached by leaping off a cliff or crumbling parapet wall in just the right place—and that those who misjudge its location will plunge to their deaths.

Whatever the truth about the Jester, <sup>18</sup> the inn that bears his name serves excellent food. I especially recommend the fresh river trout on toast with a sauce of lemon, cream, and pepper, and the delicately prepared venison. Tables at the Pride always sport dishes of interesting relishes and sauces made on the premises. Some are fiery, but others are subtle delights—and approach the finest

fare of the Elven Court, I'm told by elven friends. The wine cellar is excellent— I was astonished to find Saerloonian Glowfire and the pale green wines of northern Calimshan (both 1 sp per tallglass, or 3 sp per bottle) among the more usual winter wine and local vintages.

I've included here a hearty recipe from the inn's kitchens because of its usefulness to travelers on the trail everywhere in Faerûn. Another trail tip from the cooks at the Pride: When reheating beef stew for a later meal, add some basil, chopped garlic, and chopped or crushed lemon or other fruit—berries will do—to liven it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Local rumors say the Jester has recently been seen again, upriver—but I was unable to find word of this outside Julkoun.



## Kheldrivver

This hamlet nestles between grassy knolls at the eastern end of the Troll Hills. <sup>19</sup> Once an isolated monastic community dedicated to the veneration of Oghma, it was raided many times by trolls and several times overrun, with the monks all slain, driven out, or forced to flee into hiding.

Some 200 years ago, all the monks were dead, and their hold was in ruins. An Amnian adventuring band of vicious reputation, the Circle of Scythes, came to the ruined monastery in search of spellbooks and other riches, but disappeared while exploring the monastic cellars. A servant left with the horses told wild stories of many-tentacled things rising out of the ruins with the adventurers struggling in their grasp.

Other adventuring bands went out to the ruins of the House of the Binder (as the monastery was known), but came back emptyhanded. The cellars had fallen in, and there was no trace of spellbooks, adventurers, or any monsters beyond all-too-numerous trolls. The rubbervskinned menaces took over the hold for some years, until they grew so strong as to imperil all use of the trade road. A great war band was whelmed in Amn to deal with them under the leadership of one Kheldrivver, a warrior-turnedswordseller who promised to sweep the area clear of trolls and keep it that way.

He did so, and transformed the

House into a stone-walled cluster of fortresslike, stone-turreted homes, with slate roofs. As little as possible was made of wood so that fire could be used with enthusiasm in the event of troll attacks.

The community became home to a few mercenary warriors who wished to retire. Under Kheldrivver's leadership, they gave protection and dry, guarded warehouses to farmers wishing to settle in the area. Many times since then the trolls have been hurled back, and Kheldrivver's Hold, which over the years has become known just as Kheldrivver, remains a farming center today, visited by many enterprising merchants who sell the splendors of far-off places and buy fresh produce for sale in Waterdeep and the cities of the Sword Coast.

Kheldrivver himself disappeared mysteriously soon after the rebuilding of the monastery. Locals whisper that he was definitely digging alone in some of the deeper local cellars, in search of whatever monks' treasure might remain—and most folk believe he found something and then something else found *him*. Local legend now speaks of him being seen only by night—with stag's antlers growing from his head!

There are pits, walled off corners, and stone piles in many cellars in Kheldrivver. Most folk don't speak of them, while others let adventurers go down into their own cellars in return for fees of 50 gold pieces or more. While certain village people may be getting rich on this, so far now adventur-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>The location of Kheldrivver is shown on the map in the section on Roaringshore found later in this chapter.



ers have returned from the cellars any more wealthy than when they went in.

## Places of Interest in Kheldrivver

## Shops

**Ungairmer's Bootery** Secondhand Shop and General Gear

The foreporch of this converted warehouse has a large overhang, big enough to shelter horses at the hitching rail that runs along the porch front. Many lamps hang here, and of evenings this is the closest thing Kheldrivver has to a tavern. Tall lidded tankards of ale are sold by stout, placid Oeth Ungairmer at 5 cp each to all who'd like to gather for a chat, perching on old chairs, chests, barrels and the like. A spell cast each night by Oeth's daughter, the fat and good-natured minor sorceress Shulunda, keeps insects away from the porch while folk chat and play at cards, shirestone, fiveknights, and other board games.

Ungairmer's shop buys and sells secondhand material of all sorts, from sails and wagons-a wizard once even reported finding something he excitedly called a spelljamming helm there, though to most observers it looked like an old chair in need of repairs-to daggers, belt buckles, and old boots. Ungairmer calls his place a bootery because he can order in new, custom-made boots from corvisers in Waterdeep. They usually cost a steep 20 to 25 gp per pair. Older footwear, and most things in the shop, range from 3 cp to 50 gp in price. Wagons and harness are the top-priced items. Waychests and good gear that farmers can use, such as rope, spikes, and plows, are in the mid-price range. Buckles, daggers, and the like are at the low end. It's a useful place to poke about in, though nothing beside Torleth's Treasures in Gillian's Hill (also covered elsewhere in this guide).

#### lnns

The Troll's Nose

This inn's name comes from the stuffed, painted, incredibly long (almost 6 feet!) troll's nose mounted on its signboard. From time to time, local wags hang lamps or "borrowed" undergarments on it. Unfortunately, it's the only exciting thing about the inn.

The fare at the Nose is solid but unexciting beef stews, thickly sliced breads, and diced vegetables smothered in brown sauces. The Nose is a dank, dimly lit place of stone, looking rather like a cramped old castle inside. Its low-ceilinged dining room is decorated with blackened troll skulls everywhere-in rows on shelves, along the mantel, and hanging from hooks on pillars and over the tables. I felt as if I was in the midst of a minstrels' mummery show.

In addition to its unique decor, the Nose is as expensive as an top-rung Waterdhavian inn. However, it has proven a haven to many a troll-harried traveler.



## Lathtarl's Lantern

This small fishing village appears on few maps of the Realms, and most merchants don't even know it exists <sup>20</sup> Part of this seclusion is because of its marshy surroundings, and part is due to its proximity to the dangerous lich hold of Larloch's Crypt. (*Larloch's Crypt* has become corrupted over the years into *Warlock's Crypt*, and that's as good a warning to travelers, I suppose.)

Lathtarl was a pirate some 300 winters ago whose greed drove him to fall afoul of the elven ships out of Evermeet. Forced to flee for his life in a sea fight, he ran his ship ashore here as a wreck, most of his crew dead and himself a cripple, the arm and leg on one side of his body useless.

The wreck gave him an idea, and he became a wrecker, luring ships ashore by lighting many lanterns along the coast to fool sailors running along the coast in storms into thinking that they'd reached Baldur's Gate, Orlumbor, or some other secure harbor. Instead, if they turned ashore they found rocks, with a pebble beach just beyond. Sailors who didn't perish in the wreck were slain by Lathtarl's surviving crew or held for sale into slavery or for ransom. Calishite slavers and all the Sword Coast pirates soon discovered Lathtarl's existence, and made him a transfer point for slaves and contraband-their ships would stand well offshore on clear nights, and boats would cross the rocky bar from ship to shore and back.

The village supported itself by fishing and was also kept busy, small, and free from harassment by land-based neighbors due to frequent lizard man raids. The mouth of the Winding Water is shallow and marshy, without any harbor—and the miles upon miles of silt and marsh grasses are home to many lizard men.

These marshes carry an ill history of their own. Local rumors speak of at least two dead kings somewhere out in the fens. One was Ring Tredarath, a rebel lord of Tethyr long ago who fled with about a hundred armed retainers to found a new realm out of reach of his foes. His hard-riding band, heavily laden with all his regalia and treasury, blundered into the marshes in an evening fog and perished by drowning (some in quicksand) and as dinner for many marsh monsters. Gold pieces and a ieweled dagger have been found, and at least one lizard man has been seen during a raid wearing a golden crown, but cartloads of gold and gems are still lost in the marshes.

The other king was Bevedaur of Cortryn, a vanished realm that is now northeastern Amn. He camped in the marsh while pursuing his favored sport, serpent hunting, and was overwhelmed with all his court by a night attack from an army of lizard men. Ghostly knights are still said to drift over the marsh by night, spectral blades in hand.

Lathtarl is long dead of disease, and several times the Lords of Waterdeep and merchant houses of that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>See the entry on Roaringshore later in this chapter for a map that shows its location.





city and of Amn have placed agents in the village to intercept and battle pirates and smugglers. Threats have been made that the entire village would be burned to the ground—and the villagers slaughtered—if the practice of light luring continued. These threats have been heeded, but there's still an occasional real shipwreck in the vicinity, and pirates have taken to running stolen ships ashore here that they can't use as pirate vessels (usually old, slow, leaky cogs).

Lathtarl's Lantern would not be mentioned in this guide (few today embrace the old nobles' sport of lizard man hunting, and adventurers looking for lost crowns always seem to hear guiding rumors without benefit of a guidebook) except that it is also home to a temple to Umberlee, the Grotto of the Queen, and to an inn and tavern of note, the Wailing Wave.

## Places of Interest in Latharl's Lantern Temples

#### The Grotto of the Queen

The village of Latharl's Lantern is sheltered on the north by a crescent-shaped, rocky ridge. At the seaward end of this ridge are some tidal caves, the innermost of which has been enlarged and connected by winding stone stair tunnels to a small-spired temple on the surface. This temple is decorated with relics of wrecked ships—notably a large collection of figureheads. Most of the figureheads are larger-than-life-size



humans, but there are also mermaids, hippocampi, and more fanciful creatures. Here a staff of at least 12 human clergy (most of them True Servants of the Wave <sup>21</sup>) take offerings from local fishermen, visiting pirates, and other sailors to appease the goddess or to buy her favor for voyages ahead.

The sea cave under the temple, the Grotto itself, is said to be guarded by marine undead created by the priests (lacedons, undead sharks, and the like). The Grotto is also said be visited from time to time by the Tribute Gatherers—powerful evil creatures of the deep who serve Umberlee and take riches gathered from the temple offerings into the watery deeps for the use of Umberlee's agents and followers all along the Sword Coast. On at least one occasion, a sunken ship crewed by skeletons has risen from the deeps to ram and then fight off a pirate vessel hoping to plunder the temple.

# INNS/Taverns The Wailing Wave

# \$\$\$00000 \$\$

Named for a local legend that the waves rolling in on the village's pebble beach wail on certain moonlit nights with the mournful cries of all who've drowned in the wrecks off Latharl's Lantern, this is one of the wildest taverns—and busiest inns—on the Sword Coast. Unlike its rival pirate base, Roaringshore, Lathtarl's Lantern remains inaccessible and little-known, which makes it ideal for slavers and others who must deal in



illicit cargoes that are bulky, require special care, or are hard to hide. The Wave is a low-ceilinged, smoky, ramshackle roadhouse like a hundred others in the Realms. Former stables out back have been converted into two rickety floors of night rental rooms. It is not much of an inn, but the marshes and wandering trolls and brigands between the village and the Coast Way make it highly unlikely that any traveler would seek out the Wave just to stay there—and visitors to Lathtarl's Lantern don't have much choice where they stay.

Where the Wave really shines is as a bar. Pirates, adventurers, outlaws, humanoids, half-breed monsters, and monstrosities come ashore in small boats to crowd the taproom night after night, talking business and enjoying the best stock of beverages anywhere on the Sword Coast. Most of the shady business people — and merchants — on the Coast come here often.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>True Servants of the Wave are specialty priests of Umberlee. They command some still-mysterious powers.



## Liam's Hold

This hamlet of about 50 folk stands on the eastern side of the Trade Way about a day's travel south of Daggerford. A flat-topped tor of bare rock, about two acres in area, overlooks the road. It is ringed by a low stone wall, and at the south end stands a crumbling keep tower. The settlement is crammed onto the top of the tor, with its grazing and tillage fields to the east and a pasture for passing caravans to camp in just to the south, overlooked by the tower.

The tower was the fortress-home of the powerful wizard and warrior Sunder Halyndliam, whose name's been shortened locally over the years to Liam. The hamlet is named in his memory—partially because his silent armored wraith, chilling blade in hand, is said to still defend the tower against intruders. It is certain that no fewer than six thieves have been found dead at the base of the tor, having fallen from the tower during the night.

Liam is buried in a spell-guarded crypt deep under the tower. Although he's said to lie in a casket with all his spellbooks, a magical staff, an enchanted blade, and magical rings on his fingers, no adventurers, thieves, or rival wizards have succeeded in plundering his remains. They have failed because of the otherplanar creatures that guard his tomb and local folk who furiously deny access to the crypt. They do so thanks to a community legend that says the tower was raised with magic and

removal of Liam's magic will cause it to topple, crushing the hamlet under falling stone. This is why every possibly magical bauble Liam possessed was buried with him.

Today, the tower is part of the Holdfast Inn, which is good enough to deserve coverage in any guidebook to Sword Coast establishments.

## Places of Interest in Liam's Hold

lnns

The Holdfast Inn

!!! BBBB

This inn consists of Liam's tower, full of ornately carved stone stairs and arched windows. The tower has three two-story-high wings stretching out from it. Two stand along the parapet walls of the Hold, and the third (the kitchen and pantries) joins the stables, enfolding the inn's entry courtyard. All of the inn is built of stone. The halls are carpeted against the chill with furs atop rushes, and the bedchambers sport floor furs, window hangings to keep out cold breezes, and curtained and canopied beds.

Service at the Holdfast is attentive, with warming pans placed in the beds on cold nights, a nightkiss drink at bedside without charge, plentiful wash water and towels, warming robes for guests, and generous, filling food. A stay at the Holdfast is an experience not to be missed. Many merchants specially arrange their travels so they can stop here and relax.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>The location of Liam's Hold is shown on the map found in the entry for the Way Inn, later in this chapter.

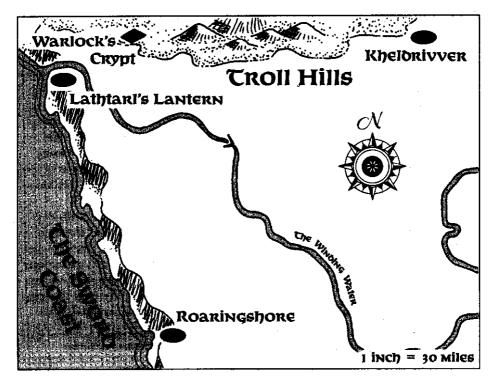


# Roaringshore

This isolated village nestles in a small deepwater cove on the coast about a third of the way south from the mouth of the Winding Water toward the city of Baldur's Gate. Like Lathtarl's Lantern (see that entry), this is a pirate hold—but unlike the Lantern, the reputation of bold, lawless Roaringshore has spread far up and down the length of the Sword Coast.

Though such tales have grown in the telling, this is still a place raided at least once summer by mercenary armies of 70 or more lancers or horse archers, hired by Amn and Baldur's Gate. As a result, prominent folk and businesses here tend to be (literally!) short-lived. Even so, two establishments of note have lasted long enough to garner well-deserved reputations: the Swordarm and the Broken Goblet.

The traveler should be aware that many pirates here are runaways, local thieves, and adventurers all out to make an impression, and perhaps attract some business as mercenary hirelings. A lot of posing goes on. This can make Roaringshore a very dangerous place for the visitor who isn't in a large, well-armed group, or obviously powerful. I had to flee it abruptly—but I did manage to learn the details about the two main attractions first.





## The Broken Goblet

Tavern

iii dod

When pirates and lawless folk come to brawl and carouse, their first thought is to roll into the Goblet' swords drawn, and swagger as they promenade along the raised entry dais and down toward the bar. It's the place to be seen—and the place to be killed in, if the body count of the last few years is any indication. Don't go here unless you're very good with a blade, alert, have a lot of well-armed friends with you, and are protected against poisons,

A spell such as *ironguard*<sup>23</sup> (which renders one immune to metal bladed weapons for a time) is an ideal protection here, but beware, this place is



strongly warded, and the defenses permit only existing defensive spells to continue. Newly cast spells are twisted and lost, without effect. The defenses also whisk all missiles (hurled glasses, daggers, darts, bolts, and arrows alike) up into gentle contact with the ceiling. This prevents broken glasses—for drink is served here in ornately carved and blown glasses, some of which are exquisitely beautiful, and rather more of which are simply rude.

#### The Place

The Goblet consists of a dark taproom with stone floors, massive wooden support pillars and furnishings (trestle tables, wall benches, and high-backed wooden chairs), and candle lamps. The latter can be raised and lowered on chains via ceiling pulleys and from hooks located behind the bar, and consist of wagon wheels that each support a circle of seven to nine fat candles, each set in a buckler to catch the melted wax A favorite trick during a brawl is to leap behind the bar and undo the hooks, sending the heavy lamps plummeting down atop the tables. The danger of fire makes this tactic grounds for ejectiondead or alive.

The staff here go armed with daggers, boot knives, and steel knuckle spikes.<sup>24</sup> Overly amorous patrons are warned that the large men with many scars *are* large men with many scars, but the buxom wenches with the long lashes and ready smiles are *dopple*-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Ironguard is a 5th-level wizard spell found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS<sup>®</sup> Adventures hardbound.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Knuckle spikes do the same damage at a blow as a dagger, veteran users tell me.



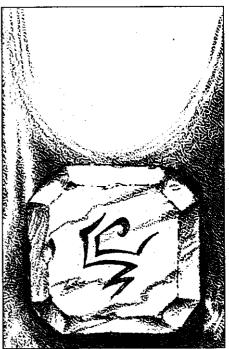
gangers. They often respond to overly familiar touches with a dagger strike and a shift in the form of one hand into a loose curtain of flesh that can be slapped over a patron's face to smother or blind him!

The street door is guarded by two house guards with orders to keep it clear so that access is denied to none. Brawls are thus prevented from erupting on the way in and out the door and harming trade. This has the effect of allowing each patron to make a grand entrance on the raised entry dais, which overlooks the taproom from behind a safety rail. Atrophy of a long-ago brawl decorates this smoothed oak tree-trunk railing: A black-bladed battle axe split the rail in two and crashed down to bury itself haft-deep in the edge of the floor beneath. Its owner did not live long enough to get it free—so the proprietors of the tavern left it there as a warning.

From the taproom, many small, shadowy stairs lead down to jakes (a dangerous place known for stabbings and impromptu body disposals, with direct connections to the tidal sewers) and up to private drinking rooms, some of which have sliding panels offering egress to side alleys. Lighting is always scanty in the Goblet, and a *ghost pipes*<sup>25</sup> spell provides gentle background music to cover most conversations from casual eavesdropping.

## The Prospect

There are constant rumors that the staff and ownership of the Goblet are

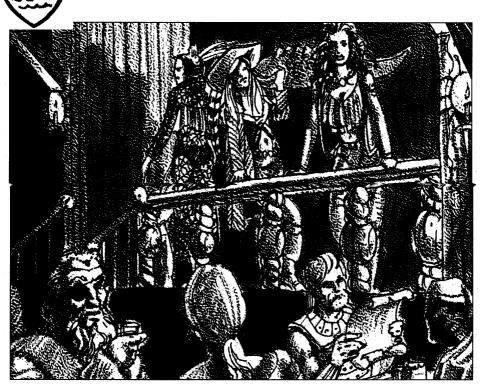


Ward Token of the Broken Goblet

not human-and consist of beings far more deadly than the doppleganger "wenches." Most folk believe that some fell power runs the tavern. Its wardings are certainly strong, and spells have been deflected from them that hurled back or slew large mercenary attacking forces sent to cleanse or raid Roaringshore. (Those bearing a ward token can cast spells within the tavern.) The truth, according to one Harper I spoke with, is that illithids rule this tayern and use their powers to gather information about the illicit doings of the Sword Coast from the guests who come here.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Ghost pipes is a 2nd-level wizard spell found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures hardbound.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>The Harper is right, Elminster confirms—after which he sarcastically thanked Volo for revealing only what is prudent about Roaringshore.



#### The Prices

Ale is 3 cp per tallglass, and all wine (from a vast cellar) is 4 cp per tallglass. Sherries, zzar, and Tashlutan rollrum are 1 sp per tallglass. Whiskeys and fine brandies are 2 sp per tallglass, and elverquisst is 1 gp per tallglass. A recent fad is to mix drinks with syrups and flavored waters. Such concoctions bear such names as Flaming Dragon, Drawn Dagger Down, and Moonlit Knight, and go for 1 gp each. Trying every one is the current diversion of the idly rich and danger-seekers.

The Goblet sells no food, but patrons can bring in all they like. One free glass per patron per evening is included in drink prices. If one wants to buy others, they're 1 sp

each. Many delighted merchants take away armfuls—and the prettier or more whimsical or salacious pieces fetch prices as high as 12 to 14 gp each in far-off, wealthy places such as Saerloon, Selgaunt, Suzail, Teflamm, and Westgate.

#### Travelers' Lore

The anonymous owners of the Goblet keep many treasure maps, wills, and written deals hidden in vaults for pirates, who pay 100 gp per page for long storage. The items are stored from when they are left until they are retrieved by the surrender of a symbolic key (usually a brass token). Rumor has it that the tokens look like brass sea shells, but no one has ever been able to definitively prove this.



### The Swordarm

Inn

!!!!! BBBB

You'd expect the only inn in a pirate hold regularly rocked by brawls and open fighting in the streets-and often raided by mercenary armies, too-to be a crumbling, filthy, vermin-infested ruin of a place, on the verge of falling down. Well, the Swordarm was—until a powerful evil wizard decided to make it an investment. He devised a mysterious spell of great power<sup>27</sup> that entrapped his three apprentices, binding them in a mystic web of forces linked to the old stone-and-timber inn building. Their life forces hold the inn together and convert spells cast within it into raw power that binds together and repairs the place, and makes guests safe from hostile spells.

The unfortunate apprentices can be seen to this very day, two young men and a young woman clad in dusty, dangling tatters of robes, floating face-down near the ceiling of the lobby and staring down in frozen, endless horror at folk who pass below. After they were trapped, their captor and master, the mage Aulyntar Cowlsar, pierced the walls with many new windows, added an ornate balcony and hanging staircase, and cut a pool now full of hot tingling waters into the floor of the lobby. (This pool would be a delight to bathe in were it not for the continuous feeling of being watched—due to the unfortunate apprentices, no doubt.) These changes probably mean that should anything befall the apprentices, the Swordarm will undoubtedly collapse. Until then, it's quite an impressive place.

#### The Place

The Swordarm is magnificent, akin to the luxurious Waterdhavian villas of richer nobles. It sports high ceilings, large windows, marble floors and window seats, and statues adorning the halls and rooms everywhere. (These statues were undoubtedly plundered by pirates from temples, grand houses, and sunken ruins up and down the Sea of Swords.) Local rumor swears Aulyntar spies on guests and goings-on through the carved eyes and ears of these stone figures.

Every floor of the inn has a central hall linked to a landing on the soaring hanging stairs, an audience chamber opening off the landing to the hall, a dining lounge, and guest chambers. The inn has no main dining room. Guests can elect to be served meals in their rooms, and most do. (A secret back passage is rumored to plunge down within the walls to a tunnel that runs far from Roaringshore. There it branches to open high on a cliff above the sea on one hand and in a swampy, overgrown ravine in the rolling wildernesses on the other.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Elminster refused to give out any details of this spell *under any circumstances*. He also said that the names of the apprentices were not forgotten—but that they had done as many deeds of grasping evil as their master, and deserved their fate.



The Swordarm also offers guests a secure storage service, employing spell- and monster-guarded vaults under its imposing bulk. The roof has sliding panels in one gable that allow an agile aerial steed such as a griffon or a hippogriff, or a person employing flight magic, to arrive or leave without landing in the street below. This loft stables occupies the upper floor of the inn. The conventional stables are behind the inn. separated from it by a street. The inn is surrounded by streets and lacks any sort of yard. The stables open into a warehouse for the storage of wagons, coaches, and caravan goods.

#### The Prospect

The Swordarm has housed many powerful and dangerous pirates and adventurers over the years. They have come to expect-and depend on—a place that is clean, quiet, and safe. On the rare occasions when guests have offered violence to anyone, swift and sure spells (presumably those of Aulyntar, who prefers to remain unseen) have lashed out to end the matter-usually by destroying the belligerent guest, although there have been some reports of such individuals being teleported abruptly into the depths of far-off Skullport, beneath Waterdeep, or the heart of the jungles of Chult, or into the midst of Icewind Dale.

So this inn has become a neutral meeting place for deadly enemies, uneasy rivals, and swaggering folkof-danger alike. If guests intend to do business together, however, they tend to arrange to meet elsewhere—no one is free of the feeling that Aulyntar or his frozen apprentices are always watching and listening. Some folk are so sensitive to this feeling that they cannot stay in the inn for more than a few breaths. On the other hand, it is the safest haven in Roaringshore—unless one is a wizard. There are several tales of mage guests disappearing here over the years.

#### The Prices

Everything at the Swordarm is the best, and everything's included in the daily rate except drink. Unfortunately, that rate starts at 6 gp per night for a tiny bunkroom and soars to 25 gp per night for the six largest suites. Pirate crews usually grab these suites more or less year-round. Here they can post guards, strew their belongings around, and still sleep farther apart than they do on board. The nicest single bedchambers, though, are often all vacant (22 gp per night).

Drinkables are 2 gp per bottle or 4 gp per hand cask, regardless of what's inside such containers. Some rare vintages can be obtained here, but the variety is small, and the supplies irregular. The inn does not want to appear to compete with local tayerns.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Swordarm bills itself as a home for those who swing blades for a living. Most wizards don't care to stay the night within its walls, for mages



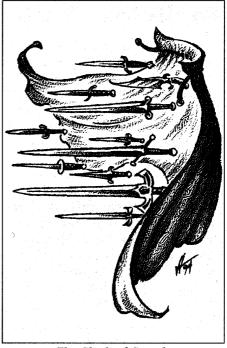
have a habit of vanishing from the even the most securely barred bedchambers.

Most folk suspect these disappearing guests were wizards who tried to free the trapped apprentices or tamper with the protective spells of the inn. Most wizards suspect Aulyntar examines every mage under his roof, and destroys those who possess magic he covets. If this is true, he must be very powerful by now.

It is certain that one Haldanshyn Cloak of Swords, a wizard of both power and importance from southern Amn, lost his temper in the inn one evening six summers ago. All that night a furious spell battle raged above; around, and through the Swordarm, as Haldanshyn flew about, engaging a foe who appeared only as a swirling, sparkling cluster of luminous eyes.

Much of the inn was destroyed, or twisted and sagged about the terrified guests-many of whom dove or tumbled out windows and fled for their lives amid explosions, gouts of flame, and hair-raising crawling fingers of lightning. Near dawn, Haldanshyn was seen to snarl and then howl in pain as his magical staff suddenly caught fire and blazed with phosphorescent orange and bilious green light from end to end. The blaze was intense, and the wizard plunged from his hovering position in the air above the inn, leaving his skeletal hands still clinging to the ashes of the staff.

The grisly relic remained aloft for some days, but the wizard was torn



The Cloak of Swords

apart by unseen raking claws as he fell, leaving only his tattered, drifting cloak behind.

A shadowy form—presumably Aulyntar—emerged from the inn and caught the cloak, but it erupted in a rushing torrent of glittering steel, and the form hastily flew off, trailing a mist of blood. The cloak drifted away more slowly. What became of it, none in Roaringshore can agree. Some say another wizard mastered it, others that it blew out to sea or fell into Aulyntar's clutches-and still others whisper that it yet lurks around the village, pouncing on lone, drunken sailors and slashing them to ribbons in fits of insane vengeance.



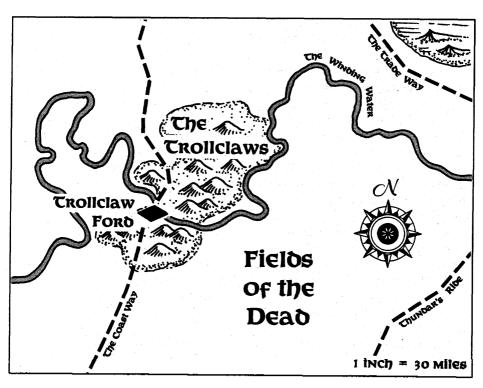
## Trollclaw Ford

This ruined hamlet stands where the Coast Way fords the Winding Water amid mist-shrouded, grassy hills. Trolls lurking in the hills make the place perilous no matter how many mercenary armies or adventuring bands come to clean the monsters out.

Abandoned a dozen winters ago, the Ford has been rapidly overgrown. The trolls keep creatures larger than snakes and birds from lairing there and pull apart buildings digging out badgers and burrowing food. Most caravans camp heavily armed in bonfire rings well away from the Ford and make a run across the river at

highsun, flanked by horse archers whose arrows can be ignited at a trot from spear-slung braziers.

The most recent settlers at the Ford were the High Helms, a veteran adventuring band. A dozen strong, they rebuilt a villa into a fortified hold and held out against the trolls for three full seasons—until someone slew them and shattered their tower with an explosive spell blast seen from miles away Their treasure still lies in their fallen tower, guarded by their undead bones and possibly by whoever-or whatever-slew them. (Folk speak of their slayer being a serpent-headed mage with faceted, amber-colored eyes and the slitted pupils of a snake.)





## Ulgoth's Beard

This hamlet of about 70 folk is located on the north side of the mouth of the River Chionthar west of Baldur's Gate. Its stone houses nestle in a natural bowl in the cliff top overlooking the river, and a warning beacon is maintained on the cliff top to alert Baldur's Gate to attacking ships.

In fact, the name of the settlement comes out of its history of being attacked by sea. Of old, pirate raids on Baldur's Gate were numerous. Ulgoth was a stout, bristle-bearded pirate of great girth and greater reputation. The beacon was said to "singe Ulgoth's Beard" by robbing him of surprise so that the raiding force he led was met by ready resistance and hurled back with the loss of many pirate lives, including Ulgoth's own. (He tried to use a ring of flying to escape the fray and was last seen heading out to sea, his flying corpse bristling with twenty-odd arrows.)

The hamlet consists of sheepherding families, who keep their sheep on the rolling grasslands behind the cliff, and some fisherfolk, who transport their boats up and down the cliff by means of a cradle of massive cables. None of them are wealthy.

The Beard lacks a road link to the interior, though pack mules have an easy journey over the grassy hills to and from Baldur's Gate. There's no tavern in the Beard, though one resident brews his own dreadful ale and sells it at 1 cp per tankard. Ulgoth's Beard also has no inn, but travelers can camp out in a ruined keep just north of the hamlet, on the lip of the bowl. The keep was once home to a cruel pirate lord, Andarasz, and legends speak of undead

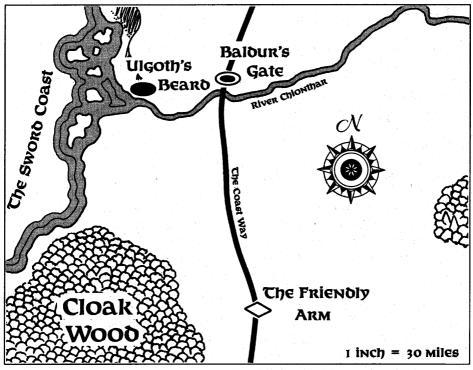
lurking in the storage caverns beneath the keep. All of the storage caverns have already been searched by many eager pirate crews over the years.

There's nothing else notable about the Beard except Shandalar, an eccentric mage who dwells in a floating house just east of the hamlet. It's actually a moored Halruaan skyship, its upper decks rebuilt into a series of balconies, hanging gardens, gabled rooms, and lightning rods. Shandalar harnesses the lightning strikes from the many storms that sweep over the Beard to energize strange magical constructs of his own devising-and is said locally to be immune to all harm from lightning, as he often strolls about amid the crackling bolts, garments lashed by the wind, laughing and singing in the driving storm.

Beneath the wizards house is a small stone hut fitted with double doors. This is the entrance to his own extensive network of caverns, where several monsters loyal to Shandalar-living mushrooms, locals swear!—







shamble about in the darkness harvesting mushrooms. The mage makes a steady income growing his "shrooms" for the tables of Baldur's Gate. Some apothecaries in that city dry them and sell them whole or powdered for use in cooking, healing, or the enchanting arts. Shandalar has a huge variety of mushrooms and sells them for as little as 1 cp per handbasket (for plain brown garnishcaps, used mainly in beef stews and pies) to as much as 5 gp each (for deadly poisonous gloomshrooms, favored in the making of poisons, fleshnumbing physicians' unguents, and

blindness-healing ointments).

Most of Shandalar's sales come from the garnishcaps and two other cooking mushrooms: small white rock buttons (2 cp per handbasket) and succulent frilled felarndon 'shrooms. Shandalar's three beautiful daughters (and, it is rumored, apprentices<sup>28</sup>) take a *floating disc* of these into Baldur's Gate's market daily.

Shandalar is known to have agreements with powerful pirates and outlaws. He keeps certain treasures safe for them in the hidden depths of his mushroom caverns in return for steep annual fees (1,000 gp per chest).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Elminster says the daughters are his apprentices, warns that Shandalar rivals Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun of Waterdeep in power, and that his daughters are no slouches as mages either, and further says that the mushroom caverns contain at least one gate to elsewhere in the Realms (just where, he's not certain). The guardians of the caverns include myconids, as the locals say, but they are also home to mechanical spiders of the wizard's own making and even more dangerous predators. Several bands of thieves have died failing to evade them.



## Warlock's Crypt

Over the years, the name *Larloch's Crypt*, still found in many accounts and on older maps of the Realms, has become corrupted into *Warlock's Crypt*. The soaring towers of this isolated walled castle can be seen from afar, sweeping up like menacing blacknailed talons reaching into the sky.<sup>29</sup>

The mighty lich Larloch dwells here in a city of the undead. Many adventurers have claimed to have destroyed him, but the Shadow Ring always rises again to rule over his city of wraiths, wights, liches, vampires, and hosts of lesser undead, from crawling claws to monster zombies. Larloch is said to be one of the last surviving sorcerer-kings of Netheril, although his mind is quite gone. He exists today as an ultra-lich of awesome powers, whimsical and crazed—at times snarling and hurling spells at random, and at other times a brilliantly calculating inventor of magical items, new spells, and magical strategies. No less than 16 Red Wizards of Thay are known to have gone to the Crypt to try to destroy him or steal some of his power. They all failed—and of them all, only Szass Tam has ever survived.

The Crypt is a series of wizards towers, each standing in its own circular walled garden. The towers stand on the banks of a small spring that rises in the cellars of the highest tower (Larloch's own) and is much befouled by the discharges of the Shadow Ring's experiments. Its luminous waters cast an

eerie, flickering glow over the towers by night. Their walled gardens are surrounded by a gloomy network of twisting streets and abandoned houses crowded along the stream banks. In these streets and houses, lesser undead shuffle about in accordance with the orders of the lich lords who serve Larloch. Over this dusty city leap many dark, railless bridge spans that link the garden walls and the lower levels of the towers. Skeletal giant bat steeds and stranger creatures sally forth from them to attack travelers who venture too near, since Larloch is interested in gaining living humans for use in his experiments in undeath and in seizing all magic he can find. This is not a place I recommend travelers even venture within sight of.

Most sages believe the Crypt, which is very old, was once a Netherese wizards' enclave—home to mages who now serve Larloch as liches. Larloch is said to command the spells of an archwizard, a small arsenal of magical



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Warlock's Crypt can been seen on the map in the entry on Roaringshore, earlier in this chapter.



items—including Netherese power scepters of various sorts, rare or unknown elsewhere in the Realms of today—and the absolute loyalty gained by some fiendish magic, of the liches who serve him. He is said to enjoy conversing with ghosts and unfortunate adventurers who fall into his clutches, and has even been known to grant freedom to captives in return for a service.

The service is usually to gain for him some close-guarded and powerful magic from elsewhere in the Realms, such as a special spell or favorite magical item held by a Red Wizard of Thay or mighty archmage. Such freedom comes with magical strings. A person who ignores the mission once away from the Crypt is magically transformed into some horrific tanar'ri or other

monstrous form (that of a hook horror, for instance&slowly one limb at a time. Larloch has his own code of conduct, however. Completing such a mission does mean return to proper form and complete freedom—for those who do not try to deceive or attack him.

Some minstrels have wrongly dubbed the ruler of the Crypt "the Warlock" or "the Warlock King," but be warned that those who compose ballads using such terminology are likely to be kidnapped by night things and spirited away to face torment and undeath at Larloch's hands. It's not even a good idea to sing the ballad known as "The Warlock King" within three days' ride of the Troll Hills, for fear Larloch should hear and take interest.





## The Way Inn

This isolated stone inn has been a famous landmark for many years, starting from when it was the last inn along the way south from Waterdeep for many days of hard and dangerous riding (hence its name). In recent years, as evil grew in ruined Dragonspear Castle, the Way Inn became ever more important as a base for mercenary armies raised by the Lords' Alliance to keep the Trade Way clear and as a haven for merchants hurrying along that long and perilous overland road.

Recently, an ancient black dragon destroyed the inn while the armies based there were afield battling legions of baatezu. The dangers of the High Moor never sleep for long. Trolls and yuan-ti from the Serpent Hills have been seen in growing numbers, but the otherplanar evil centered in ruined Dragonspear seems to have been broken—for now.

Several Waterdhavian merchant families sponsored a rebuilding of the Way Inn on the same site (an elevated, defensible site with a deep well) as before its destruction, but larger and stronger than ever. On a recent visit, I found it most impressive.

The rebuilt Way Inn stands on the western side of the Trade Way two days' hard ride (about a hundred miles) south of Daggerford. It is a walled compound atop a flat, grassy plateau about three acres in extent that overlooks a loop of road that

leaves and rejoins the main trade road, giving caravans plenty of room to camp.

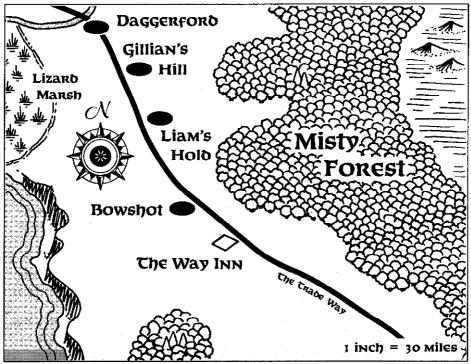
From the loop of road, steep cartways lead up to three gates. All of these cross wooden bridges. The bridges slope on central pivots when support timbers are retracted from inside the compound to dump attackers into large spike-filled pits.

The gatehouses are small stone keeps. Each is topped with a catapult. All firewood for the inn is under cover in these gatehouses, so fiery missiles can be hurled at attackers or an overrun gatehouse can be torched to prevent attackers from pouring in until the flames die down.

The inn itself is of stone, with a tile roof. Its windows look out over the road, and it is topped by a lookout tower equipped with several multiple-crossbow guns called airhurlers. Each of these is equipped with firing cords and shields for a person firing the gun, so that the airhurlers can be fired directly or aimed and fired from the room below.

The stables for the inn are in one corner of the plateau. Three fenced paddocks open out of them, and more airhurlers are located on the stable roof. The village that once straggled around the slopes of the inn's height is gone. The inn staff and attendant businesses (a wagon repair shop, a smith, a trading post, an apothecary, and a trailwares shop selling rope, skillets, tarpaulins, tents, sledges, harness, and the like) are housed in a row of stout stone





cottages along the west wall of the plateau. A small orchard and hedged gardens are the only features that spoil the impression of being inside an army castle ready for war.

However, this elaborate fortress is still the same good, clean, friendly refuge it used to be, and it remains under the capable hands of Dauravyn Redbeard, once an adventurer of note. He's seen evil rise in Dragonspear Castle and be shattered—only to rise again, several times over. He is taking no chances. He lives today only by the magic of a priest of Tempus who restored him to life after the last confrontation. He has a hired standing guard of 21 warriors at the inn, 10 of whom are

always on patrol along the edges of the High Moor, looking for trouble. As Dauravyn often says, looking east, "If it isn't orcs, it's trolls, and if it isn't trolls, it's baatezu. If it isn't baatezu, it's dragons-and if it isn't dragons, it's something worse."

## Places of Interest in the Way Inn

lnns

The Way Inn

RRRR

The stone rooms of this new and solidly built stone inn are lined with tapestries and have fur rugs underfoot. Heavy draperies are provided to



cut the chill and breezes from the eastward-facing windows, each of which opens onto a private balcony, when desired. The dimly lit halls are also carpeted with furs.

Beds are canopied for warmth, but remain simple. Each has a pull cord to summon service, which is efficient and attentive. Lighting is provided by brass-and-glass full-shuttered candle lamps. These can be unhooked easily and taken elsewhere in the event of battle.

The Way Inn does steady trade. Rooms are 2 gp per night, with meal and bath included. Drinks are extra. Stabling is an extra 1 sp per night, and wagon or cart storage an additional 1 gp per night. Wagon guards (sons and daughters of the inn's staff) can be hired to watch over goods by night for 1 sp more.

Folk who camp below the inn compound do so for free. They can enter for meals (1 sp per serving, drinks extra) or buy firewood (1 cp per armload) and water (1 cp per night to use the pump located in each gatehouse).

Wagon wheels and axles are kept in stock for quick repairs. They usually cost 25 gp each. The inn does a steady trade buying and selling horses, oxen, mules, and cattle. Animals are typically bought at 10 gp under the usual price and sold at 10 gp over, though a hard bargainer can reduce this spread to 6 gp either way. Goats provide the inn with milk and cheese, and wheels of a sharp, crumbly white cheese are made on the premises. Remounts too injured

to nurse back to health find their way into the inn stewpots.

The inn serves good, hearty fare, notably braised bustard on buns. This dish has a spreading reputation. It utilizes the stale leftovers of the large, oval loaves of hardbread baked at the inn, toasted and spread with a gravy based on onions, chicken livers, and offal from slaughtered livestock. Onto this are laid the cooked fragments of meat from bustard (plentiful on the moorlands, with a taste similar to grouse) brought back by the patrols. It's simple but good—and is usually served hot enough to burn the mouth of an incautious diner badly.

Meals are often enlivened by a minstrel. Redbeard hires traveling singers for a tenday at 5 sp per day. If other minstrels Redbeard likes arrives in the midst of another performer's stint, they'll be given free room and board to stay on until they can begin their own tenday stretch.

Although no priests are on staff at the inn, the Duke of Daggerford and his barons take turns sending a priest of Helm or Tempus to watch over the needs (and dedication) of the ducal militia and the hired defenders of the inn. Such clerics are always available to heal and pray for travelers.

In short, this place may lack charm and any gentle beauty, but it offers impressive services, is well run, and provides a roadside refuge where one is sorely needed. Its reputation and the benefits it provides continue to attract clientele even in the face of the overshadowing, but slumbering, threat of Dragonspear Castle.



## Zundbridge

Named for its creator, the wizard Zund, this squat, massive stone bridge spans the River Dessarin, carrying the main caravan road south from Waterdeep down the Sword Coast. Zundbridge has held firm without repairs for over 80 winters, despite the worst of the roaring Dessarin spring floods—and occasional collisions with the masts of river barges whose captains were too stupid, drunken, or fog blind to avoid such disasters.

Waterdeep patrols the road as far as Zundbridge and maintains a guardpost there to stop the efforts of adventurers who come in search



Ward Token of Zundbridge

of a stone golem said to have been used by Zund in building the bridge. Legend says the golem was left at the bridge when Zund died, free to be taken away by any who can divine or stumble onto the secrets of commanding it.

Over the years, seekers of the golem have dug around the bridge on both banks, swum beneath it, and even tried to pry stones out of the bridge arches. Some say the golem is long gone, but others believe it serves as one of the bridge supports or is buried under the road at either end of the bridge. 30 Legend also says-correctly, most mages tell me, though none of them will say how they know this, or more importantly, how to do it in that the holder of a special ward token can command the golem in the bridge to raise up arms to attack or hold beings on the bridge, or even to come out of the bridge and fight. This last action would destroy the bridge. The golem is said to obey the silently willed wishes of the tokenwielder in detail, and can be com-

<sup>31</sup>Elminster: "And we'll keep it that way, thank ye."

<sup>30</sup> Elminster says the golem is part of the bridge and can rise up to fight when properly commanded-by Khelben, Laeral, Maskar Wands or himself, for instance. This will of course shatter the bridge. Those wishing to see evidence of the golem's presence need only cast any sort of spell that damages or tries to transform the bridge, he says-and stone arms will rise up out of the bridge to punch and grapple with the caster. The golem has thrice the normal strength of a stone golem, double the normal hit points, can move its arms around freely within the bridge, can sense the precise location of all living beings on the bridge, and is immune to many spells. Some spells even reflect back from the golem at the caster-just which ones, Elminster says with a grin, you'll have to learn for yourselves. He also advises leaving the golem alone.





manded to return into the bridge—which, unless the golem is destroyed in the battle, will restore the bridge into a functioning span. Supposedly, if two ward token wielders both try to command the golem, it will break free of all control and attack every living being it sees until destroyed, preferring to slay ward token wielders over all others. The Lords of Waterdeep fear that if the bridge were left unguarded, it would soon be demolished by zealous would-be golem owners.

The Waterdhavian guardpost is equipped with a flight of three griffon steeds to give Waterdeep advance warning of the approach of any important visiting delegation or attacking force. The guardpost is a small stone hut and stables with a lookout tower and encircling wall. It is equipped with heavy crossbows mounted on tripods and aimed along the roads, and is warded. Anyone trying to get into the armory or stables without bearing the proper ward token is subject to three rounds of *magic missile* attacks. Four missiles per round will leap from walls, floors, and ceilings to smite the intruder.

There's no settlement at Zundbridge, but there is a campground and water pump for the use of travelers. The Waterdhavian guards serving at the outpost are polite and helpful unless they are attacked or witness anyone disturbing the bridge in any manner.







# The High Moor



owadays, most folk think of the Moors as a rocky wilderness, vast and uninhabited except by fearsome

monsters, notably trolls. Bounded on the west by the Misty Forest, whose dim blue glades and deep groves have always carried a fey and whimsical, but deadly, reputation, and on the east by the yuan-ti and ophidianhaunted Serpent Hills, these cragstudded, rolling grasslands are said to hide the ruins of lost, long-fallen kingdoms. Just which kingdoms, sages argue furiously over. Minstrels sing colorful but contradictory ballads on the topic, and legends are uniformly vague. "The bones and thrones of lost lands" is a favorite phrase; it is borrowed from a long-forgotten ballad.

A few wolves and leucrotta are the most numerous predators on the Moor thanks to trolls, bugbears, and hobgoblins, who have slain most other large beasts of prey. Their relative scarcity has allowed hooved grazing animals of all sorts to flourish, from small, sure-footed rock ponies to shaggy-coated sheep. Those who dare to venture onto the Moor can be assured of ready food—either they'll catch it, or they'll become it! Rope trip-traps, javelins, and arrows are the favored ways of bringing down the fleet grazing animals, although those with patience and a quick hand can dine on grouse, flunderwings,

rabbits, and ground-dwelling moor rats in plenty. Large, well-armed bands of rounders often venture up onto the Moor in warm months, seeking horses to round up for training and sale elsewhere or livestock that can be taken away—but the greedy are warned that hobgoblins and worse always seem to find and ambush such large-scale intrusions. Small bands invariably pay for such attempts with most of their lives.

Deer dwell in the Misty Forest, though travelers are warned that the elves who dwell there consider the forest their own private game preserve. The only deer outsiders can hunt without risking a few elven arrows are those that stray from the forest onto the moors or down into the coastal hill lands where the Trade Way runs.

Like the Evermoors to the north of the Dessarin, the High Moor is studded with lichen-festooned rocky outcrops, moss, breakneck gullies, and small rivulets of clear water that spring from rocks, wind among the rocks for a time, and then sink down again. It's also shrouded by frequent mists. The prevailing winds are gentler breezes than the mist-clearing, chill winds of the North.

Except in winter, frequent forays up onto the High Moor are mounted by troll-hunting Daggerford militia bands, hired mercenaries, or adventurers looking for experience. One





can always count on meeting trolls, and usually orcs or goblins as well. Bugbears, hobgoblins, and stronger foes usually skulk out of sight, battling intruders only when cornered or when the intruders are foolish enough to camp for the night on the moors.

With the obvious exception of Dragonspear Castle, ruins are harder to find in the moorlands. Foundations, cellars, and underways are usually all that remains—and almost all such serve as the lairs of monsters. Many towers have toppled into rock piles and have later been hollowed out to serve as tombs—which have in turn been plundered and then turned into dwellings by beasts arriving still later. There are also legends of magi-

cally hidden castles and high houses that appear only in certain conditions, such as in full moonlight or deep mists, to those in the right spot.

The porous limestone of the High Moor plateau, worked on by water over eons, has caused the many canyons, pools, and appearing and disappearing streams visitors can readily see. There are miles upon miles of caverns-and underground rivers-beneath. Such terrain gives ample entrance to the Underdark, homes to lairing beasts, and makes for a penetrating damp that serves to harbor creatures of an amphibious inclination. Because of this, the Moor is often haunting and dismal of nights-light a fire and attract monsters, or huddle together, shuddering, for warmth!



## Dragonspear Castle

Over the years, Dragonspear Castle has become a name equated with great evil—as dread a name as Hellgate Keep. Once the proud castle of Daeros Dragonspear, a famous adventurer of the North, Dragonspear has become a ruin inhabited by wave after wave of evil creatures. Many colorful but false legends have grown up around the Castle, but here I've set down, as best I can, the truth about Dragonspear—as revealed by several great archmages and corroborated by several tomes of lore at Candlekeep. For most readers, this will be the first time the tale of Dragonspear has been truthfully told.

Daeros was a bearded half-dwarf, a magical and rare half-breed of human and dwarf as tall as a human, but with the burly physique and affinity to stone of a dwarf. He rescued and befriended a copper dragon early in his adventures, and after he seized a fabulous fortune in gems used by a beholder in an abandoned dwarf delve to lure prey, Daeros decided to retire. He chose the site of the dragon's lair: three low hillocks at the western edge of the High Moor, some 200 miles south of Daggerford. The dragon, Halatathlaer, had grown tired of constantly fighting off thieving orcs and goblins, but was loath to leave its home. Daeros gathered humans and dwarves loyal to him and built his castle around the dragon. It was a large and splendid structure, composed of a massive central keep surrounded by a strong ring of

four towers (the inner ward). Around the keep was a spearhead-shaped outer wall of nine great towers. Dwarves were welcomed at the Castle, and a city of small stone cottages and delvings beneath them grew rapidly within the walls. Dwarven fighting prowess made Dragonspear a secure fortress and a place of growing influence.

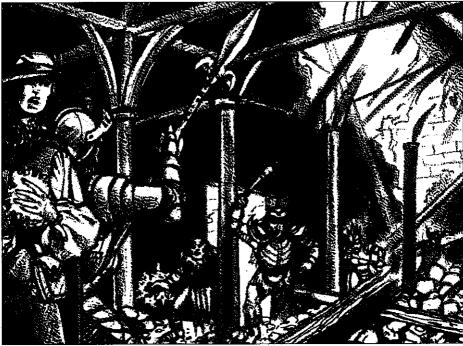
Daeros was often seen flying over the High Moor on the dragon's back in those days. He wielded a long spear (some say 40 feet or longer) against foes on the ground and summoned his troops with a horn. His energetic raids hurled the orcs and trolls back, scouring the moor until it seemed clear of them.

Unfortunately, Halatathlaer was old, and grew weak. More than one wizard coveted the dragon's hoard and used shape-shifting magics to spy on what was there and how it was guarded. One Calishite mage, Ithtaerus, created a spell that allowed him to teleport the sleeping dragon away to the wastes. He then revealed what he'd done to Daeros by means of a magically sent vision that falsely showed the wizard creating a gate through which the dragon was taken. The gate was actually a portal to Avernus, uppermost of the nine layers of Baator<sup>2</sup> —a portal that would only be activated by the death-blood of a mortal. The enraged Daeros plunged through it, weapons ready-and was slain by the wizard's spells. The gate opened, and several baatezu came through it. While the alarmed dwarves of Dragonspear battled them, the wizard looted the dragon's hoard at will and then returned

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: "Thank ye. Charmed, of course."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Known also as the Nine Hells.





Halatathlaer to the inner ward, bound in magical slumber.

Then the evil mage called upon several dragons he knew, telling them that the copper dragon of Dragonspear slept, near death, and it and its hoard were easy prey. Three young and ambitious dragons heeded and took wing to Dragonspear. They met over the fortress and fought, destroying Halatathlaer and much of the castle before slaughtering each other. The last survivor, a black dragon named Sharndrel, was enraged to find the hoard it had fought so hard for looted so that only coins were left, and barely enough of them for the wyrm to bed down on. It went seeking the triumphant and overconfident Ithtaerus, found him gloating over the best wine of the castle in the upper chambers of the

central keep, and blasted him with its acid until his bones crumbled to powder.

The castle was left as a shattered ruin, eagerly raided by orcs, hobgoblins, bugbears, goblins, and trolls from the moor until all the dwarves were dead or had fled. The serpentmen even sent a large war party to search it for magic, and they bore away all they found.

Then hobgoblin chieftains seized the castle, They used it as a base from which to raid the caravan road and the lands around; gathering orcs and trolls into ever-larger bands until Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate raised armies and cleaned the castle out. The victors set an armed temple to Tempus (called the Hold of the Battle Lions) in the cellars to guard against creatures using the *gate*, for it seemed indestructible. Some spell laid



on it hurled back magics used against it and sent forth ghosts of creatures slain in the castle to attack those approaching it

Seasons passed, and more baatezu in Avernus discovered the other end of the planar link. Stealthily at first, and then in greater numbers, they came through into Toril, overwhelmed the temple, and took the castle as their own. It is this foul evil that was recently broken and driven back to Avernus. Though the gate was magically sealed, most folk believe that it will be reopened again and that the stain of evil will never leave the castle now.

Today, the outer wall of the castle is breached and broken in many places. Its great gate is a gaping hole, and from there a road leads straight to the inner gate, whose doors have also fallen. Though the inner ward is still a defensible—if crumbling — fortress, the former city between it and the outer wall has become scrub vegetation, pits (the former cellar delves of the dwarves), and heaps of stony rubble. The central keep is a blasted shell, the gigantic skeleton of a dragon draped over the broken walls, and the interior floors fallen in. Most of the surrounding inner ward towers stand relatively intact. Travelers fleeing from trolls, brigands, or worse in this area could take refuge in one of these and defend it.

Beneath the castle flows an underground river. It runs from an unknown source north into the Misty Forest, and there turns abruptly southeast. It can be entered from a certain cavern in the eastern reaches of the forest, and its main passage is large enough to be navigable by boats, although many lurking monsters, drownhole side passages, and whirlpools make this a dangerous route.

The river runs southeast along the edge of the moor, and then turns northeast and passes under the southwest tower of the castle's inner ward. There it connects with a trapdoor and shaft in the cellar once used for waste disposal. It flows swiftly on to a large and permanent whirlpool and thence drains down to unexplored depths in the Underdark. If one wins past the whirlpool, the river runs on to emerge as a waterfall in a ravine (one of many such clefts in the High Moor), where it flows out into a small pool. The pool drains away into the depths again,

Dragonspear Castle is still a popular destination for adventurers and thrillseekers. Many poke about in the half-revealed dwarven cellars-but anvthing that can be found easily has been carried away already, and trolls and orcs lurk in the ruins, awaiting prev. Brigands use the castle, and more than one misty night has seen a wild spell battle between rival adventuring bands caused by brigand trickery. The outlaws lie in wait after setting in motion their plan, and hope to seize gear, wealth, and magic from the weakened survivors-or dead victims—of the misunderstanding they've brought about.

Every season brings new plans for the rebuilding of Dragonspear Castle in the taverns of Daggerford, Waterdeep, Scornubel, and Baldur's Gate, but somehow such plans come to naught. Some say it is the castle's ill luck, caused by the great evil of the baatezu. Others blame covert work by brigand "lords," the Zhentarim, and the Cult of the Dragon, all of whom either want the castle for their own or want it to stay a ruin.



## Hammer Hall

West of Mt. Hlim, near the shores of Highstar Lake, is a pit half full of loose rubble. An opening cut in its rock walls leads into the Halls of the Hammer, a long-abandoned dwarf hold.

Nearby stands Hammer Hall, a log house and stables encircled by a palisade. Hammer Hall was built by an adventuring group who called themselves the Men of Hammer Hall as a base to explore the dwarf hold from. On several occasions the adventurers, who hailed from Waterdeep, fought off trolls, orcs, and bugbears from this fortified home—but they went north several years ago, and have not been heard from since.

Hammer Hall has reportedly been broken into several times. I found it deserted, and with stones dug up in a corner to reveal a storage niche (empty, of course). It remains, however, a stout building offering shelter to travelers in this wilderness area. Stacked, dry firewood even waits beside its main chimney!

The humanoids that roam the High Moor know its location, of course, and can be expected to attack anyone seen traveling to it. Wood smoke will draw them, of course, but in a blizzard or blinding rainstorm, Hammer Hall may prove a refuge worth the harrying. The design of its entrance forces intruders to make a sharp turn down a wooden hall, or chute, fitted with

ports for archers or spearmen to attack from. A lone swordfighter can hold the narrow entryway beyond.

Inevitably, rumors have spread of treasure buried by the adventurers in Hammer Hall and not recovered. The dug-over state of the grounds suggests that many have come looking, but none have found.

Rich treasure may well lie in the dwarf hold. The Men of Hammer Hall told a bard of their adventures once, and the tale he recounts has been echoed by later adventuring groups. The dwarf hold (the Halls of the Hammer) is said to have a large central chamber wherein a hundred human corpses dangle from the ceiling in a forest of chains—an illusion that vanishes and reappears from time to time, for no known reason. At least five watchghosts (powerful wraithlike things)<sup>3</sup> roam the halls beyond, guarding a glowing magical war hammer that floats by itself in a chamber guarded by helmed horrors<sup>4</sup> and magical defenses. What powers the awesome-looking hammer possesses, who put it there and why, and how to win past its defenses are all mysteries as yet unsolved. Seeking the answers has killed at least 20 daring but unlucky women and men thus far.

Adventurers wishing to join in this deadly game are advised that the pit with the opening into the dwarf hold can be found by traveling south and east from Highstar Lake, following a line of three hills whose tops are all

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Encountered in Undermountain, beneath Waterdeep, as well as elsewhere in the Realms.

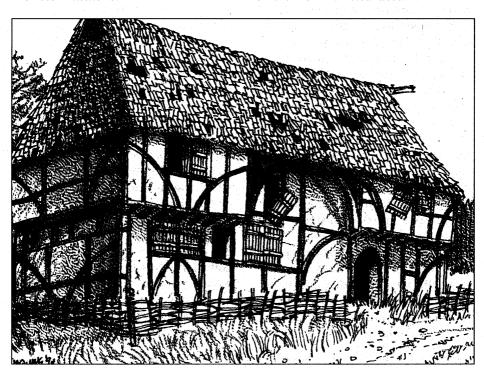
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>These magical constructs are fully detailed in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting boxed set.



bare rock. The hill closest to the lake has a spring gushing from it that joins the waters of the lake, and it is the only crag on the eastern shore of the lake with a spring that does so.

Highstar is an eerily beautiful lake of clear water that the dwarves believe has magical properties. The lake has many other names, and so often appears without a name on many maps of the area. It is the large lake in the northern reaches of the High Moor and is usually the only lake shown anywhere near that locale. Called Dauerimlakh by the dwarves and Evendim by the elves, this body of crystal water has several names among humans, and some folk travel days just to see it, risking monster, attacks.

One human legend of the lake speaks of it holding in its depths a drowned temple to an unknown or lost goddess, but the most popular tavern tale of the Coast lands says the lake holds magical treasure in its depths—a sunken Netherese airship crammed with gems and magic. The wreck is guarded by undead wizards, the tale goes, who seek to steal the bodies of the living for their own use. They jealously and persistently stalk adventurers who take something from the ship and then escape. They walk by night and leave trails of slimy water, following their prey clear across the known Realms to get their belongings back. Supposedly, if they kill a thief, they steal his or her body for their own twisted uses.





## Orzogoth

In the heart of the High Moor stands a notorious ruin—a beacon for treasureseekers from all over the Sword Coast, especially Amn. Tales of heaps of gems caught the imagination of greedy Amnian merchants so strongly that Orogoth found its way into the lore learned by every wide-eyed child. No guidebook to the Coast is complete without mention of this lure for adventurers—a lure that brings swift death to almost all who seek it.

Orogoth was a gigantic, sprawling villa, the luxurious home of a Netherese family of cruelty, idle wealth, and magical might. They dabbled in strange magical experiments involving captured dragons—yes, their magic was that strong-with the aim of gaining dragon powers for themselves. Most accounts say the senior mages of the Orogoth family perfected not only means of acquiring dragon powers, but also of taking on dragon shape. The tales go on to say that they flew away in dragon form and never returned. Some tales swear they were trapped in dragon shape when their human bodies collapsed under the strain of changing, and a hasty retreat into dragon shape was all that saved their lives. Other accounts say they preferred dragon form, and still others that they were magically bound into dragon shape by treacherous young relatives.

The elders vanished, and Orogoth became the playground of the arro-

gant, spoiled, willful, cruel family members, who magically compelled dragons—perhaps their shape-changed elders, perhaps not—to wing about the Realms, seizing treasure, and bringing it back for the amusement of the young Orogoths. This treasure was usually acquired by slaying other dragons and seizing their hoards, but also by tearing open castles and plundering known treasuries within. A dragon-like hoard of heaped treasure accumulated.

Inevitably, there was strife among the proud younglings, resulting in some sort of titanic battle. Some say it was over some magically mighty plundered item, but it is clear that dragons were blasted from the sky. Orogoths died screaming as they burned like torches, towers were toppled—and when all was done, the villa was a ruin, the Orogoths were dead or fled away, and all that remained to guard the treasure was a dracolich (an undead dragon, the result of some horrible spell).

Ever since, adventurers and the Cult of the Dragon have come to the ruins to seize the treasure—and been killed, transformed into beast shape, or sent fleeing across the Moor. Some folk say other dragons aid the dracolich in defending the hoard, or that one or more deranged surviving Orogoths lurk, invisible, in the ruins, wielding strange and awesome spells and magical items. Whatever the truth, Orogoth remains a deadly fascination to all who have heard of it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Orogoth's location is shown on the map found in the entry on Xonthal's Tower, in the chapter on the Backlands.



## Secomber

This village of 900 folk rests on the northwestern bank of the confluence of the Unicorn Run, the cool, clear river that runs down from the mysterious heart of the High Forest, and the Delimbiyr, the watery road to the eastern wildernesses of the High Frontier. Secomber stands on three hills, atop the western fringes of a once-mighty city that was, if legends are true, the proud capital of the long-ago human realm of Athalantar, Kingdom of the Stag. Folk digging cellars in Secomber usually turn up old cobbles and stone walls. Inadvertently freed gargoyles are a fearsome, recurring problem, but sometimes magical treasures are unearthed. The fallen city is said to have been ruled by mages.

Secomber is a peaceful, rather boring village of fisherfolk, farmers, stone-cutters, and hired guides and guards for the frequent caravan traffic. The holdings of the farmers fan out northwest of the village, and the fisherfolk make a meager living spearing and drag-netting fish and freshwater crabs from small skiffs on the two rivers. The stonecutters manage a decent living quarrying slabs of pink granite from the cliffs that mark the northern edge of the High Moor.

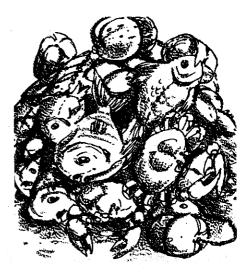
Roughly half of all Secomberites are human. Almost as many are halflings, whose low, garden-adorned homes make the hills of the village seem more a terraced estate than a settlement. The remainder of the citizenry are a few dwarves of the Ironeater clan and a scattering of gnomes and moon elves.

Secomber has a garrison of 30 sol-

diers provided by the Lords' Alliance. They dwell in a small palisaded fort atop one of the hills and train a hundred or so locals in swordwork and rudimentary tactics. Many of these swingswords hire out as caravan guards.

The garrison is led by the Lord of Secomber, Traskar Selarn, a ranger of some fame. The garrison patrols the farmland and vicinity diligently, capably dealing with the few orc and bugbear raids that get this far west. If it has to defend the village, pitched battles in the tree-girt, unfortified hills are likely but the defenders will be aided by an iron golem and two stone, beast-headed, winged golems provided by the mage Amelior Amanitas—and by the mage himself if he's at home. The winged golems look rather like giant gargoyles, but can't fly.

Lord Traskar has made sure that adventurers are welcome in Secomber, and many adventuring bands use the village as a supply base for treasurehunting forays. Secomber is also known for its gardens and eccentric architecture.





## The Seven-Stringed Harp

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This tavern stands at the meeting of two winding lanes in the lowest spot in town, which is beside a horse pond in the center of the bowl between the three hills Secomber is built on. It is a ramshackle, sprawling building of many wings, varying roof sections, and little bay windows and cupolas. It's easy to get lost inside, what with all the alcoves, the general dimness, odd steps up and down, and the prevalence of odd pieces of furniture and old tapestries salvaged from half a hundred old

Waterdhavian villas. Locals come here to meet and chat. Merchants come here to do business and to hire guards. It's a hard spot to miss. It has a huge hitching rail outside, overlooked by a floating, glowing, faintly playing harp. The harp is not an item, but a permanent spell created by local mage Amelior Amanitas. It's not solid, and can't be disturbed.

#### The Place

Cramped and crammed with comfortable but mismatched furniture, this place sports low ceilings, lots of odd corners, and a servants' passage that branches out in all directions from the bar, its entrances hidden by tapestries. Beware when chatting,







lest you be overheard by someone standing behind the nearest tapestry. (Suddenly thrusting blades through a tapestry to discourage listeners is considered bad form.) The Harp is dimly lit by a few wandering, bluehued *driftglobes*. Its layout consists of many passages and rooms opening off a central taproom.

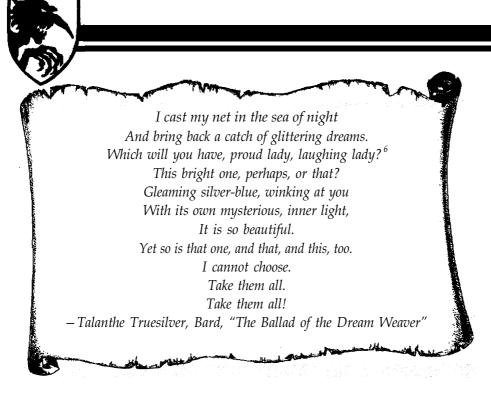
#### The Prospect

This tavern is a place of pilgrimage for many minstrels and bards in western Faerûn. It's famous as the place where "The Ballad of the Dream Weaver" was first heard. There's rarely a night without three to seven bardish sorts in attendance, playing for free, as tradition demands. Their presence makes this a noisy—but

thankfully melodic—place. It's a fascinating place to watch people, too, with adventurers, pipe-smoking halflings, dancing gnomes, and gambling elves on all sides—but it's not a quiet place to relax or a place to conduct business best kept private.

#### The Provender

The staff of the Harp tends to be of the young, female, beautiful, long-haired, graceful, would-be-harpist sort. These lasses cheerfully serve out kegfuls of drinkables, salted biscuits spread with snails or smallfish (if you order them so), and gurdats (panfried and pepper-spiced mushrooms rolled in melted cheese). These are served with a white, cool, minty wine, if requested.



#### The Prices

Ale is 3 cp per tankard (large, battered pewter things, not meager cups), stout is 5 cp per tankard, and minty wine and local aszunder are 6 cp per tallglass. All other wines are 8 cp a glass or more.

All servings of provender are 1 sp a plate. Most patrons will find a plate makes a light meal. Two plates would serve as a nice, but unspectacular, eveningfeast. Ale can also be ordered by the hand keg, at 6 cp. Throwing hand kegs in the taproom is frowned upon.

#### Travelers' Lore

About 40 winters ago, this tavern was

just as ramshackle, but lacked its name and wide reputation. It was then called simply the Stag. Then a young, half-elven lady bard by the name of Talanthe Truesilver sat down in the taproom one night and performed a ballad that has become one of the most famous and widely performed songs in all the Realms.

Today, minstrels use "The Ballad of the Dream Weaver" as the long heart of a set of songs and as a sort of latest rumors compilation, adding favorite legends, strange sights they've seen, and the like as verses. Patrons of the Harp are proud that it was heard here first.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>A female singer changes the last half of the third line to "proud lord, laughing lord." All minstrels weave strange sights they've seen—hints of hidden treasure, lost legends, and intrigue—into this famous ballad. As a result, the verses of this song vary greatly from performer to performer, but the refrain given here, used to open and end the piece, is music famous all over Faerûn. Elminster admits he's only a rough hand at music—though he's a nice smoky baritone and has heard a *lot* of music over his long life—and can't write down tunes as we do. He says this ballad can be sung—slowly, drawing out the words—to the tune of the traditional Celtic song of our world, "Dawn of the Day." It's not the right tune, according to the Old Mage, but captures the right mood.



## The Singing Sprite

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This inn faces the Seven-Stringed Harp across a rather muddy meeting of lanes. The Sprite is a slate-shingled, many-gabled, solid-looking stone building that is cold and damp in winter, and warmer and damp in summer. Its pleasant staff sets the tone for your visit, and it offers meeting rooms for hire (that Secomberites use constantly) and a superior feasting board. The innkeeper on duty is Heverseer Windfeather or one of his three brothers—they take shifts.

#### The Place

The Singing Sprite is named for Lathiril Shrune, the long-dead wife of its builder, a human wizard by the name of Ganatharas. She was a sprite, and sang atop tables to the delight of patrons. The present owners, the gnome family of Windfeather, don't go in for such performances—not with the Harp right across the road.

The inn has stone walls slathered with cream-colored plaster and hung with tapestries that look as if they once did service on some colorblind Calishite's harem beds (and probably did, too). The floors are dark, polished duskwood—just the thing for sliding the length of a hall on one's behind if one isn't careful, and apt to creak when one is walking about late at night with a crack a loud as any arquebus. The furnishings are old, massive, and comfortable—and every room comes with its own portable

(portable by two strong people, that is) polished copper bathtub.

The centerpiece of any stay at the Sprite, however, is the common dining room: an airy, plant-hung chamber with large windows overlooking the intersection outside. Most guests get very used to it—and do so gladly.

#### The Provender

Food at the Sprite is a treat. The dining room never closes, and it serves some dishes that make my mouth water just remembering them. Foremost of these is a dish known as Three Crabs. This, naturally enough, is three soft-shelled green river crabs yielded up locally by the Delimbiyr. These are served whole, with only the eyes, mouth, and stomach removed. Cooked in fat until golden brown, they face each other on a round toasted loaf of flatbread that has been spread with chopped greens and a white sauce of cooked leeks and garlic, parsley vinegar, and beaten egg yolks.

The light side dish that usually accompanies everything else in this dining room is A Trio of Trumpets. This is a plate of three fried, crisp crackers, each as long as a human's hand. These trumpets are horn-shaped crackers stuffed with melted white cheese, chopped nuts, and fried mushrooms.

Roast lamb, venison, and beef make up most of the dishes at the Sprite, but there's another surprise not to be sneered at: a truly revoltinglooking dish known as the Hungry Knight. The Hungry Knight is a plate of flatbread rolls stuffed with chicken



## Fowl Stew

Take ye a wild bird or poultry bird, kill and pluck it. Else, if ye have no use for the feathers, spit it and hold it in flames. When the feathers catch, let it blaze. The skin will blacken and crack, and so can be drawn off. Roast the fowl almost brown. Then cleave it in four parts, and cast them into a pot half full of wine.

Let simmer over flames while ye mince onions and any soft or wrinkled fruit ye may have, and then cast these cuttings in. Then add to the pot handfuls of crushed dried sage, thyme, and a pinch of cinnamon or ground cloves. The strong-stomached often add crushed fresh garlic.

If ye have any cold chopped potatoes or leftover broth, add as well-but mind ye increase the dry spices at least two handfuls more.

Add other reasonings to taste.

livers fried in garlic butter, and garnished with diced pepper potatoes and dill. Its savor is wonderful!

I often rose from my table groaning, while the stout, beaming gnome servers urged still more food on me. I persuaded the cooks to let me set down the plainest of their recipes, for fowl stew, because they do this standard fare so well.

At the Sprite they use damaged birds and leftovers for this stew. After speaking with the cooks for the time it took them to empty three bottles of wine (not long, I assure you), I can add the following note to this recipe: The other seasonings referred to are most often parsley, pepper, garlic, and salt.

Whole fowl, however, are usually

spitted, crisped over an open fire, and then simmered in broth until needed for serving. Then they are drained, put over flames again briefly, and served on a platter drenched in warm cream and accompanied with steamed greens (bought for 1 cp per basket from citizens of Secomber, most of whom have lush gardens). Some of the cooks add snails, oysters, or chopped nuts to the cream as it is warmed.

This cooking method can also be applied to the heart, lungs, liver, and innards of venison and boar. Take care to chop them finely and cook long enough, stirring and adding wine as necessary, until the bits are all softened and much turned to gravy.

I've heard this same cooking



method can serve for giant eagle, though it dries out easily, and three or more eggs should be cracked and drained into the pot during the simmering. The dark flesh of the eagle emits a brown foam when cooking, which is the fat that keeps it warm aloft. Skim this off when it appears, and when no more is seen, it is done.

#### The Prices

Mead, milk, and wine are all 2 gp per tallglass, and ale is 6 cp per tankard. All platters and stew bowls are 7 gp, but this includes two tallglasses or tankards, hot rolls with butter, and biscuits. These side dishes are enough for a servant to dine on while the master polishes off the main dish.

Rooms are 10 gp to 17 gp per night (varying by size and location), which includes hot baths, clothes-mending services, and stabling.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Sprite has several secret rooms (actually storage closets), which the innkeeper allows guests to use for 1 gp per night. One of these rooms has mysterious chamber network maps (treasure maps?) scratched on its walls. The Windfeathers charge 5 gp to look at these, and they claim they show chambers in a lost dwarven hold somewhere nearby— just where, they're not sure. The hold, Firehammer Hold, is said to hide rich treasure. The dwarves all perished through disease.



A Partial View of the "Treasure Maps" (The Writings are in a Forgotten Tongue)







# Fields of the Dead



ew merchants, rangers, shepherds, and guides claim to know every rolling hill or ravine in the vast grasslands

known as the Fields of the Dead and called wryly by some: "A tenday ride that starts halfway to anywhere, and ends up halfway to anywhere." Fewer still really know their way around the seemingly endless open lands where every grassy slope looks just like the next and small rock outcrops, crags, and stands of trees serve as major landmarks. The bards sing that every second hill is built of the heaped bodies of the fallen—and they're not very far wrong.

The Fields are named for their recurring use as a battleground: first between humans from warmer lands invading the territories of nomadic gnoll, goblin, and orc tribes; later between Calishite factions vying for access to the resource-rich North: and still later between proud and expansionist Calishite and human settlements struggling (successfully, thus far) to retain their independence. Thousands upon thousands of skirmishes have occurred in these largely trackless hills, from a few brigands or kobolds trying to raid the livestock of traveling drovers up to clashes between hosts of knights in full armor, each side filling several thousand saddles.

Rich treasure—the scattered coins of many soldiers, and magical armor, swords, and riding equipment in plenty—is said to lie buried all over the Fields. Although such tales have a tendency to be exaggerated, in this case they're founded on solid truth. Expeditions of young Amnian or Waterdhavian women and men sent forth by their parents to make their own fortunes in the world often come here to dig in this or that promising knoll in search of lost riches and magic among the jumbled bones of the (often hastily buried) dead.

Sometimes they find more than they were looking for, inadvertently freeing undead or murderous magically animated creatures from long ago, or triggering ancient magical traps set to guard the remains of those troubled dead hastily buried after dying in battle. Often they must dodge the arrows or crossbow bolts of brigands or roving bugbear, gnoll, orc, or hobgoblin bands-or the trickeries of passing unscrupulous merchants or mercenaries. They make their ways back to cities with rich booty often enough, however, to keep new tales of riches making the rounds of the Sword Coast—and to keep such expeditions coming.

In addition to hills and grasslands, features of the Fields include many small shepherds' cottages and small





walled holds' close to larger settlements or the roads. In fact, there are far too many to cover in a book a full three times the size of this one.

Stories tell of drow tunneling up to the surface world in many isolated locales in the Fields to begin raiding or to establish slave-trading connections. Both yuan-ti and ophidian settlements exist in caverns in the Serpent Hills nearby, settlements that constantly raid caravan traffic, patrol the grasslands for miles, and seek to expand their influence over ever-wider areas in the Fields below the High Moor. When winter weather drives these snakefolk underground, the trolls of

the Moor are usually driven down to forage in the Fields by hunger.

All these activities make the Fields a busy—and dangerous—place. Those who travel the Coast lands between Waterdeep and points north to Anm and the Empires of the Sands inevitably pass through the Fields of the Dead. Those who do so unprepared often join the ranks of the fallen who lie here so plentifully.

Priests can be hired in many places in and around the Fields to accompany caravans and deal with any restless spirits encountered along the way—but these good folk are reluctant to join bands too small to protect them or adventurers who'll deliberately take them into danger. Look for shields hung on shop walls that bear the hand of Helm, the bound hands of Ilmater, the clawed hand of Malar, the starencircled eyes of Selûne, or the flaming sword of Tempus.

Lay worshipers, who are usually warriors trained by the clergy and often competent as guides to the area, may be hired for a temple donation of 25 gp plus 2 gp per day, plus food and water. At least half the fee is payable in advance to the temple or hiring shrine. Priests cost 4 gp per day, plus 1 gp per day per level—and priests of greater than 7th level simply can't be had unless your mission or trip is vital to furthering the aims of the particular deity or the ongoing activities of that priesthood. Get a guide of some sort!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>These holds are home to a few farmers under the protection of a minor knight or successful warrior who rules as a self-styled lord as far as his blade will reach.



## Boareskyr Bridge

This bridge over the Winding Water was first built by the famous adventurer Boareskyr. Over the centuries, several bridges have stood here, the most recent built after the Time of Troubles. For most of those years, a "temporary" tent trading city has stood hard by the river crossing.

Travelers in the Fields of the Dead are warned not to drink the waters of the Winding Water downstream of the Bridge or for about half a day's travel upstream. They were poisoned during the Time of Troubles in a battle between Cyric and Bhaal.

The present Bridge commemorates this event. Statues to the two gods stand at either end of the stone span, which is wide enough for two large wagons to pass each other and has waist-high rampart walls as thick as three adult human males standing together. By tradition, no toll can be charged for crossing the bridge, and no buildings can be erected on it or so as to block a clear road on and off it.

Today, Boareskyr Bridge numbers about 70 tents and wagons in summer (plus those of visiting caravans), and about half that number in winter. The community exists to provide travelers with food, water, remounts, wagon repairs, and the like. It has evolved into a trading center where goods are exchanged between merchants, or wagons leave one caravan and stop over, awaiting another

bound for the same destination they're heading for.

The community of Boareskyr Bridge lacks any permanent features except a rough stone fort (known as Bridgefort) surrounded by a now-poisoned moat. Inhabitants can retreat into this structure in the case of heavy winter attacks from trolls, goblinkin, or brigands—a frequent occurrence.

Like the similarly makeshift city of Scornubel, wheeling and dealing is the order of the day in Boareskyr Bridge. Law and order is maintained by one's own sword or crossbow. Several enterprising local merchants do steady trade selling light crossbows and hand crossbows with regular or sleep-envenomed crossbow bolts.

The law in the Bridge, such as it is, is the word of powerful adventurers—notably the warrior Barim Stagwinter and Theskul Mirroreye, priest of Tyr, and their companions and allies. Barim and Theskul seem to be working toward walling in the Bridge community to make a proper city of it.

Rich merchants come here seeking the sorceress Aluena Halacanter, who raises pegasi at her estate, Heartwing, upriver of the Bridge where the water still runs clear. Trained steeds cost 5,000 gp each, but Aluena is reluctant to sell them to those who'll mistreat them or who'll simply resell them quickly to someone who will. Buyers must satisfy her under magically assisted questioning. Aluena is rumored to be a Harper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Aluena is a N hf W9.



## Durlag's Tower

This massive, isolated keep stands atop a rock pinnacle south of the Wood of Sharp Teeth. Only adventurers should approach this seemingly deserted fortress—death awaits within.

The tower was built by Durlag Troll-killer, son of Bolhur "Thunderaxe" the Clanless. Durlag was a great hero of the dwarves, an adventurer who slew several dragons single-handedly and over a long and successful career amassed a great hoard of treasure. One dwarf who dwelt in the tower with Durlag for a time spoke of rooms full of gems and a great hall strewn with dusty heaps of gold coins. "We took what we needed, freely," he said.

With the aid of hired dwarves, Durlag dug many chambers and passages in the tor and raised the lone tower above it, planning it as a seat where he could found a dwarven community and grow old in peace, surrounded by happy, prosperous kin.

Instead, dopplegangers, organized and aided by foul mind flayers, slew and impersonated Durlag's companions. After the shocked dwarf discovered the first impersonation, he was attacked by all the others and spent a terror-filled tenday frantically fighting his way around his own fortress, chased by monsters who wore dwarven forms but sought his death.

In the end, alone and victorious, he was powerless to stop the last fleeing pair of illithids. Fearful they'd return, Durlag hired the best craftfolk he could find in Waterdeep and Neverwinter and began to rebuild his tower

and the tor beneath as an elaborate succession of traps, magical wards, secret passages, sliding prison chambers, and triggered weapons—perhaps the most extensive assembly of such deadly devices in all Faerûn. A succession of spell wards were added, linked to at least three ward tokens. Unfortunately, no one alive today knows just which tokens control what areas. All three function as keys to pass magically held doors.

These traps are known to include *shield portals*, which are carved stone shields linked magically so that a dart, axe, or other missile weapon hurled into one would emerge from another, elsewhere in the tower. The shields themselves function as permanent *wizard eyes* or *crystal balls*, allowing an unseen watcher to observe from afar.

Other traps include massive stone swing-hammers set behind false doors. When the doors are opened, a massive stone ram bursts forward from behind them to smash intruders against a far wall. There are also climbing shafts inset with ladders of metal rungs. Touching certain rungs causes all of them to retract into the stone so that climbers fall, or triggers metal blades to shoot out from the seams between the stone wall blocks, transfixing climbers.

Deeply suspicious of all Faerûn—anyone could be a foe seeking to betray him for his gold!—Durlag retreated inside his tower, defending it against the adventurers he knew would come, lured by tales the trapbuilders would inevitably tell. They came—and fell or fled before the traps and the axe of



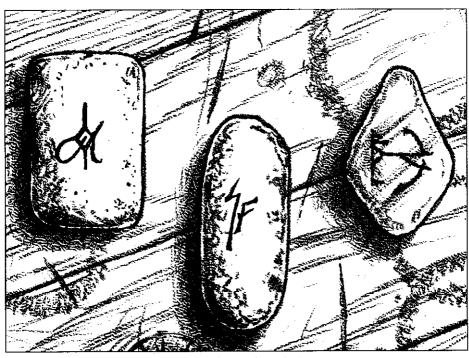
Durlag himself, who would creep up via secret passages to strike from the shadows.

For several centuries things went on like this, as the increasingly eccentric Durlag lived on fungi and mushrooms growing in the deepest caverns—and, it is cruelly whispered, the bodies of intruders (although this has never been substantiated). At length he died, and presumably his bones still lie in some inner room or passage, guarded—along with his riches—by the thousands of traps built to defend his home.

Every season adventurers mount new expeditions to Durlag's Tower from Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep, armed by the exhaustive maps and notes of earlier bands. Every year, they get a room or two deeper into the deadly maze before giving up and bringing back the bodies of those victims they could get out.

Unfortunately, in recent years the tower has acquired new inhabitants: a dozen or more will o' wisps that seem to work in organized groups to battle those who win past the traps, and that feed on those who perish in them.

Some say the will o' wisps are led or directed by a gigantic wisp with fey spell-hurling powers, but others report seeing illithids accompanying the wisps. Some hold the view that the mind flayers are controlling the wisps, and others that the mind flayers are servants of the rumored Over-Wisp



Known Ward Tokens of Durlag's Tower





just as the lesser wisps are. The truth remains a mystery for now—and will be revealed, I suspect, only at a very high price in the lives of adventurers.

Still, there seems as yet no shortage of reckless seekers-after-adventure, and every season more journey to Durlag's Tower to try to win his gold—and the reputation that seizing it will bring. Certain shops in Baldur's Gate, Waterdeep, Athkatla, and on the isle of Mintarn do a brisk trade selling ward tokens to Durlag's Tower.

Some of these are undoubtedly false—how many such keys would a wary-minded veteran adventurer leave lying about, anyway?—but some are certainly real (they've worked in the tower). They can be rented from Baldurian concerns (ask at the Blushing Mermaid) for 1,000 gp per month or more each summer by adventurers dazzled by thoughts of gold and glory. A trio of these are depicted on the previous page.

Durlag's Tower has become a

tourist attraction. Enterprising merchants in Baldur's Gate, Berdusk, Beregost, and Nashkel mount expeditions to view it for 50 gp a head, round trip, all meals included. Such trips usually feature hunting along the way and always include a daytime foray into a few of the well-known tower chambers, their traps tastefully adorned with skeletons and warnings that the tower is haunted. (The water of the forecourt well is safe to drink, but lone travelers using it should beware lurking brigands and the occasional bugbear.)

From a nearby camp, sightseeing trips always return to the keep by moonlight, to see the haunted forecourt of the tower. Strange cries, hurled stone axes, and flitting, ghostly apparitions are provided by accomplices of the tour guides. Such sham horrors are sometimes taken advantage of by wandering will o' wisps or brigands, which is why such expeditions still carry a cachet of danger up and down the Sword Coast, and the legend of Durlag's Tower grows from year to year.

I have myself seen one apparition at the tower gates: the silent figure of a robed mage, standing in midair about as high off the ground as two tall men standing one on the other's shoulders. He faced the tower, raised his hands to cast some unknown spell, then acquired a look of fear, trembled, and his body was swept away as if torn by unseen winds or claws coming from the tower. This phantom is know to appear often, but no one knows who the mage is—or was—and what he was doing when he died so spectacularly.



# Elturel

This city is the farming center of the Fields of the Dead, and its Hellriders guard and police not only Elturel, but much of the farmed and settled portions of the Fields along the Skuldask Road, the Dusk Road, and both banks of the River Chionthar. The long patrols of the Hellriders, 30 riders strong, pass along the roads every four hours, night and day. The upkeep of the patrols is aided by lodges (stockaded outposts) placed strategically within their patrol area, where food, water, flammables, weapons, and fresh mounts are kept for them. These lodges are protected against arson and casual theft by strong wards, one of the tokens for which is shown below.

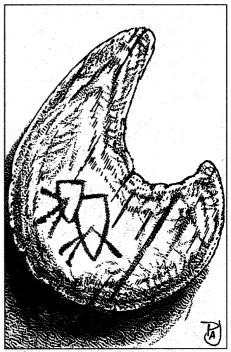
Elturel is ruled wisely and well by High Rider Lord Dhelt, a paladin of Helm who is ever-vigilant when it comes to the defense of his city-and to lawless elements who might skulk in to do business in it. A just, no-nonsense ruler who leads patrols on the road as often as any of his war captains, Dhelt keeps the city a clean, law-abiding place, a firm member of the Lords' Alliance. His 2,000 Hellriders are superbly equipped and trained—a fearsome fighting force equalled by few realms in Faerûn, Hellriders must be skilled at the use of horse bow, lance, and saber before they are allowed to ride the roads,

Travelers can rejoice in the safety of Elturel's reach, which extends as far as Triel along the Dusk Road, as far as the intersection with Thundar's Ride along the Skuldask Road to the north, as far as Scornubel along the Chionthar

upstream, as far south toward Berdusk as Windstream Lodge (one of the Hell-rider lodges), and as far downstream along the Chionthar as Stone Eagle Lodge (another Hellrider lodge). It's easy to tell these boundaries. Sheep and cattle wander on all sides when you're inside them, and brush is cut back, with hedged and stone-walled farms here and there. Outside Elturel's sway, farms and livestock are gone, and scrub trees and shrubs are everywhere.

#### Landmarks

Elturel thrives on trade. It's a city of folk passing through. Barge trade on the Chionthar meets overland trade in the city where a six-wagon ferry crosses the river. The heart of the city is a cliff-sided



Ward Token of a Hellrider Lodge



tor, a natural stronghold that was held by trolls and then orcs before humans drove them out and first settled here. Its south or river end is capped by the soaring turrets of High Hall, the castle from which the High Rider rules. A long, wooded park runs along the ridgetop of the heights, watered by a spring that rises in the cellars of High Hall and runs down the Winter Garden to cascade off the tor at the northern end in a spectacular series of falls known as Maidens' Leap.

On the slopes around are the tall, narrow, many-balconied homes of the nobles. Below this High District are the flatlands of the city, known as the Dock District. The Dragoneye Dealing Coster has a major waybase hard by the docks, and the caster's organized presence and the watchful patrols of the Riders, assisted by a trained and loyal guild of handlers (goods loaders and unloaders on the docks and wagons), keep this one of the safest dockside areas in all Faerûn. To the east, warehouses and hovels crowd together around the docks and



the crammed stalls of Shiarra's Market. The more prosperous and orderly homes and shops west of the heights are still part of Dock District, but are increasingly referred to as Westerly, a separation used to imply cleanliness and prosperous success—or, to look at it from the other view, laziness, soft living, and pretentious arrogance. Whatever the sneers exchanged, no one denies that this city is wealthy

The traveler can wander about anywhere in Elturel in perfect safety. The chief danger is from pickpockets, not knife-wielding thugs. No thieves' guild is tolerated in this city—and the best way to attract some hard questioning from a lot of eager-looking Riders with drawn swords is to whisper that so-and-so is a member of or such-and-such an incident is the work of a thieves' band.

The inns and taverns of the city are all fairly good—the lone exception that comes to mind is the poor but cheap Oar and Wagon Wheel Inn, and even it is always crowded with noisy patrons. The establishments described in this guide are among the most interesting—that is, shady and rough—in the city.

Elturel is home to a shrine to Tempus and two important temples. Both of the temples give temporary shelter and aid to the devout. Helm's Shieldhall is a large holy fortress ruled over by High Watcher Berelduin Shondar, also known as Bereld the Just, a stern priest who leads as many Rider patrols as Lord Dhelt. The High Harvest Home, a temple to Chauntea, is presided over by High Harvestmaster Baulauvin Oregh—one of the most goddess-favored servants of Chauntea in all Faerûn.



#### The Bent Helm

Tavern

This dockside tavern is Elturel's rowdiest dive. It is a brawling pit visited by those who like to get thoroughly drunk and then have a good fight.

Its signboard is visible from afar: a brightly polished, gigantic war helm hanging from a spar on a stout chain. The helm was worn by a giant in a long-ago battle just north of Elturel. It is bent halfway up at a sharp angle to the right as a result of a leaping dwarf king's axe. The death of the giant was the other result.

The helm now serves as a beacon for brawlers from all over the city, as well as visiting adventurers and caravan guards. Don't come here if you want to relax, enjoy some minstrelry or quiet, or conduct a little business in peace. All the flying tankards make it hard to concentrate.

#### The Place

Imagine a large open barn without a loft, its hammerbeam ceiling exposed. Add a few *driftglobes* (which are fixed in place, well aloft, and serve to heat the tavern as well as light it), a flagstone floor, and rusty metal cladding—mainly made of old shields, hammered flat—on all walls and pillars, that continues as high up as possible. Put a bar at one end, staff it with burly, hairy-armed warriors who can throw hard and accurately, equip them a few hand crossbows and sleep-envenomed bolts to quell

major problems, and fit each roof pillar with elbow-height surround tables for holding drinks. Fill the place with thirsty patrons, serve potent ale, stout, and sherry in easily broken earthenware tankards to cut down on fatalities, and stand back and watch the fights.

#### The Prospect

The Helm has a no-weapons rule. Patrons are invited to check weapons at the door by a curvaceous lass who wears a different—but always wildly daring—costume each night. Two firm but friendly ettins armed with clubs turn away anyone who refuses to surrender obvious weapons. They're backed up by the doorclerk. She's a mage of minor power who keeps a wand of paralyzation handy.

Despite these precautions, stabbings at the Helm are frequent, and the local shrine to Tempus (the Hand That Swings the Sword) directs any visiting priests of the war god in need of funds to spend some time in this tavern's back room, healing the wounded. Typical fees are 1,000 gp per spell applied.

# The Provender and the Prices

All drinks are 2 cp per tankard, and no food is available. Available drinks include undistinguished light and dark ales, a stout with a very robust character, and ample quantities of rough, strong sherry. Pouches of pipe tobacco are 6 cp each. Lights—from tapers reached across the bar—are free.



# A Pain of Black Antlens Tavern

# !!!! 0000

This tavern stands on the west side of Maidensbridge Street, just south of where it swings westward to cross the bridge it is named for and run around the northern end of the central heights of the city to link up with Westerly. Outside the city, A Pair of Black Antlers is the best known of Elturel's taverns because it's the gathering place for those who seek adventure. Old, retired warriors, young and bright-eyed would-bes, and weary adventurers alike all come here.

The walls of A Pair of Black Antlers are decorated over the bar with a truly gigantic rack of antlers. I climbed up on the bar-as many others have done before—to measure them, marveling. They're fully 20 feet across! The walls are also dotted with the relics and trophies of many adventurers: old, notched and scarred weapons; split shields; the heads, tails, and claws of sundry shocked-looking, dusty, longdead monsters; and fading maps, bloodstained and covered with angry error-correcting scribbles, of old castle dungeons, dwarven holds, tombs, and other subterranean complexes that presumably once held rich treasures. (Some of these maps may well be palpable forgeries.)

#### The Place

Wood-paneled, dimly lit, and apt to be smoky (the fireplace doesn't draw

properly), this cozy place is a maze of stone support pillars, low, massive overhead beams, and dark, massive furniture salvaged from old villas and castles. If things are too dark to see an interesting-looking map or missive, one of three blue-hued *driftglobes* can be called for—but this will draw the attentive eyes of many patrons in the labyrinthine, many-leveled taproom.

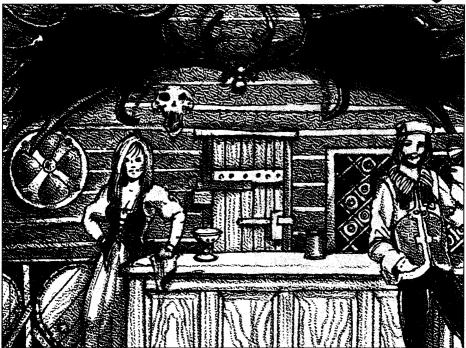
#### The Prospect

No adventurer's visit to Elturel is complete without a stop at the Antlers. Many adventures have begun in its taproom-and many more likely will. The Antlers is *the* place to hear gossip about adventuring, join a band, hire swordswingers for a plan of your own, or get hired to carry out another dreamer's plan. Need a curse lifted or some other spell cast? The patrons here will know who to call on and where they can be found, for the price of a tankard. Want to hear tales that chill the blood or splendid songs of daring deeds? This is the place. Want to impress a likely looking young blade of the other sex? Beware—some of them may be dopplegangers or shapeshifting mages-but then, you wanted adventure. . . .

#### The Provender

The heartily cheerful staff of the Antlers are all ex-adventurers of a great variety of ages, races, and appearances. They pour out drinks with generous hands—no one need feel slighted here. One can also purchase salted biscuits, slabs of sharp-tasting onion cheese, river clams, and gurdats (pan-fried,





pepper-spiced mushrooms in a melted cheese batter).

#### The Prices

Ale is 3 cp per tankard (large, battered pewter reservoirs) or 7 cp per hand keg, stout is 5 cp per tankard, and wine starts at 6 cp per tallglass and rises to 9 cp a glass for the best vintages. Sherries, zzar, and brandies are all 1 sp per tallglass. Elverquisst, the most expensive drink in the house, is 4 gp per tallglass. All servings of provender are 6 cp a plate, which provides a light meal. Two plates would serve as a nice repast.

#### Travelers' Lone

The Antlers has about as many hidden treasure legends as any drinking house associated with adventurers.

Some of them may even be true. The staff would like me to mention that the one about the sacks of gold being hidden under the boards of the taproom is false. They're tired of patrons trying to pry up boards when they think no one's looking, and every single board's been up several times by now.

The patrons have adopted one bardic ballad (given following) as their favorite drinking song. This song is a nightly favorite at the Antlers. Woe befall any minstrel who shows up to play without a sensitive mastery of it—the ability to sing and play it with mournful, macabre skill. It's a bardic standard, but here it has the revered status of an anthem to fallen comrades, proud adventurers still living—and the dark humors of gods. who must be appeased.





#### The Knights of Dragon Down

Riding, riding across the plain, See them riding home again. Bright their shields, bright their chain— The Knights of Dragon Down.

They have gone where shadows creep. Their blades a bloody harvest reap. Another dragon put fore'er asleep By the Knights of Dragon Down.

On their fingers gem rings gleam. Of such baubles, the very cream Falls into the hands, in a steady stream, Of the Knights of Dragon Down.

In a dark hall a lady sits alone,

Her bright eyes gleam as white as bone. Her dark spells a-hunting roam For the Knights of Dragon Down.

With cruel smile, a web she weaves. From each might, his soul she cleaves. Armored bones are all she leaves Of the Knights of Dragon Down.

Riding, riding, their skulls a-grin— Past the gates, the Knights ride in. Sorcery now their souls doth spin Of the Knights of Dragon Down.

Ladies scream at the touch of bone, As skeletal Knights come riding home. Undead now, fore'er to roam, Are the Knights of Dragon Down.

Minstrels used to add a verse to the end of this, late at night:

Hear them riding, nearer outside.

Never sleeping, doomed to ride.

There's no place where you can hide

From the Knights of Dragon Down.

This verse has been outlawed in Elturel, because some fiendishly evil archmage of the city wove a summoning spell into the words that swiftly brought undead to whoever sang them. They're still whispered across many a dying campfire in the Realms by those brave (or foolish) enough to risk the coming of seven skeletal warriors riding as many skeletal horses—or whatever lesser undead show up instead.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster can sing, but can't write down tunes as we do. He says this ballad is usually chanted to a dark, intricate harp melody in Faerûn—but it can be sung to a quite different melody: the tune of the traditional Celtic song of our world, "Down by the Sally Gardens."



# Gallowgar's Inn

!!! BB

This ramshackle, well-worn inn sprawls in all directions in the midst of Elturel's dockside stockyards, looking just like the spider web of clumsily linked buildings that it is. Well known for its affable host, Guldin Gallowgar, it's also known as the Manure Pile to folk of delicate noses who've had to stay there in hot summer weather.

#### The Place

Gallowgar's Inn is an aromatic assembly of mismatched warehouses. It's warm and dimly lit inside, even cozy—but the furnishings are simple, the fare even more so, and the stench of well-rotted cow dung permeates everything.

#### The Prospect

Gallowgar's Inn is famous because of its host, a retired adventurer of mature years who seems to know everyone and everything in the Coast lands and to have a finger, or at least an investment, in almost every trading or shipping company mentioned in this guide! Guldin Gallowgar dishes out advice on where to locate almost anyone or anything, and is known to sponsor caravans and adventuring bands.

#### The Provender

Food doesn't have to be spectacular when everything smells of manure but Gallowgar himself thrives on what he feeds guests: slabs of salty bread, wedges of sharp-spiced local cheese, plates of river minnows fried in eggs and seasoned with a hint of tansy and a scant handful of crushed wayflowers, and portions of stew ladled from three salt stew pots. One pot contains hare, one trout, and one shrimps and clams brought up the River Chionthar by barge.

#### The Prices

Mead is 1 sp per flagon, and ale is 6 cp per tankard. All platters and stew bowls are 5 gp, but this includes two tallglasses or tankards. Rooms are 4 to 10 gp per night, varying by size and location. Most are 6 gp. They include hot baths and stabling.

#### Travelers' Lore

Gallowgar's is a favored destination by those whose coins are few—especially if they're involved with caravans or are adventurers. His sponsorship of an adventuring group is said to cost a percentage of what treasure it might find. Rumor reports his wealth as staggering, but there's no sigh of it about his inn at least. There are whispers he's married to the haughtiest of Elturel's nobility, an apparently unattached lady of decadent tastes and endless parties whose tall-turreted home overlooks the city's gardens.

It is certain that Guldin can get from place to, place swiftly and often unseen, and that he does know an astonishing number of folk—in many cities, and from all walks of life. Many guests come to stay just to question him or to chat.



# Phontyr's Unicorn

Inn

SEES BUBBB

This famous inn is named for the ally, lifelong friend, and possible love of the long-dead mage Phontyr Wonderspell-a glowing unicorn whose hooves never touch the ground. Some say the seldom-seen unicorn is a manifestation of the goddess Mielikki. Others swear she is a polymorphed sorceress that Phontyr loved who is trapped forever in unicorn form— Phontyr could not free her from magic greater than his own. Still others say it is Lurue or Silverymoon, the Divine Beast. Cult of the Unicorn members bought the inn to be near the unicorn. They typically fall on their knees and chant with adoration when it is seen.

#### The Place

Phontyr's Unicorn is a splendid establishment of deep green carpets, ferns in hanging baskets, dim lighting from strategically placed *glowing globes*, and curtained, canopied beds. The inn's adornments celebrate the famous unicorn in many carvings, painted shields, and tapestries. Quite a few of these images are enchanted so as to glow blue-white, just as the real unicorn does.

The inn has a wine cellar as good as any to be found in Waterdeep (for comparable prices, too), several lounges and meeting rooms for the use of guests, and a fine dining room. Dry white house wine, sliced cheese, and salted biscuits are always at hand

on trays everywhere about, free for the taking. Rooms are spacious, draftfree, and quiet thanks to the tapestries that hang everywhere. These are deep green like the carpets, and each is adorned with the glowing bluewhite head of a watchful unicorn.

Eager, soft-spoken, thoughtful human staff members of both sexes dressed in green unicorn-adorned livery move quietly about the inn, seeing to every need of the guests. They even play board games or cards with bored or lonely patrons, though not for money.

#### The Prospect

Whatever the unicorn's true nature may be, the recently improved inn stands on the site of Phontyr's house, which burned down under mysterious circumstances after the archmage's death. The unicorn is seen on misty nights in or near the inn, prancing about and then galloping away in eerie silence. Legend says that those who follow it and can keep it in sight will be led to rich treasure. Not surprisingly, the inn has become a favorite haunt of novice adventurers, who hang about each night with ready-saddled horses or magical means of flight, hoping the unicorn will appear.

#### The Provender

Food at the Unicorn consists of all the usual gravy-drenched roasts and fried root vegetables, plus a few notable dishes, soups prominent among them. For conservative tastes, there's boar hock soup. Those who look





upon their stomachs as trusted friends will enjoy the cold potato-and-leek soup and the hot pheasant tail soup. This last soup is an Elturian favorite, and is named for the three pheasant feathers stood up as decoration beside each bowl. It's actually a thick simmered stock of what small game fowl that can be had and, in establishments less honest than this one, small rodents.

The soups are served before heavier main dishes. The cooks at the Unicorn excel at shark steaks fried in seed oil, and at roast boar with all the trimmings. The delicious shade of brown that they manage to cook the outside of the well-seasoned roasts to is enough to set one's mouth to watering.

#### The Prices

Rooms are 16 gp a head per night. Stabling is 2 gp extra. Eveningfeast costs another 1 gp. This includes a delightful bottle of the house wine. More wine costs 6 gp or more per bottle.

#### Travelers' Lore

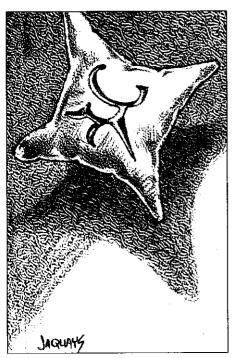
The Unicorn has at least 20 unicorn sightings a year, and a few adventurers fast and lucky enough to follow the ethereally beautiful creature have become very rich. Two bands were led to hitherto unknown, abandoned dwarven holds near the city and found stockpiles of gold, silver, and fine ores, and another group literally fell into an ancient mage's tomb in the woods!



# Gullykin

This halfling village lacks an inn or tavern, but it is the nearest settlement to the adventurers' lure of Durlag's Tower, and so it often serves as a supply base for intrepid explorers of the tower. This situation pleases the local halfling priests, who are often called upon to heal for hire, which enriches the community. It's otherwise a sleepy, unremarkable place of shepherds, wool weavers, and other farmers.

Gullykin's own claim to fame is less well known than Durlag's Tower, but is as valuable to adventurers whose luck is with them. Gullykin stands hard by the site of Firewine Bridge, an



Gullykin Ward Token

elven trading town destroyed in a sorcerous duel so mighty that it changed the course of a stream so that there's no reason for a bridge of any sort these days. The duel leveled the town and left a large wild magic area that persists today, some 200 winters later, just east of the wood lot and fishpond that marks the eastern edge of the halfling village. It stretches north as far as the honey renderers' shack in the north wood lot and as far south as the brewery (a building shared by all the halflings, who gather on its steps for a smoke and a chat in good weather).

Firewine Bridge today is simply a stretch of overgrown rubble—a fallow field used by no one. The local halflings warn visitors not to camp there or dig in the field, but don't do anything against those who do—except to watch in case some buried danger is unleashed.

Local legend says some of the folk of Firewine didn't perish in the spell battle, but were transformed into frogs, slugs, flatworms, lizards, turtles, and the like—and trapped in those forms. Some may still survive. For this reason, locals don't kill small crawling things. Some lass once inadvertently freed a wizard, one local tale goes, and ended up marrying him.

Firewine Bridge has yielded up magical treasure, mostly small trading items such as magnetic, nonrusting nails and spikes, small crystal spheres that glow with continuous inner light (hue and intensity never varying), triple-spiked *lightning wards* (belt-worn devices that force lightning



bolts away from the wearer), sparkstones that can be commanded to produce fire-igniting sparks whenever desired, and glass guardeyes (single eve cusps that once a day can be made to reveal all weapons on the body of any being-that is, the location and outlines of all items the target creature thinks are weapons). More rarely, items of greater power turn up, such as half-masks that confer infravision and the ability to see invisible beings and items on the wearer; belt buckles that magically take away the effects of a good deal of weight (about that of a burly person), allowing the belt wearer to carry heavy loads, such as the body of a wounded or sleeping friend, as if they were nothing; or rings that can call up a specific minor spell once a day, when commanded to do so. (The spell is always the same spell, usually mending or Tenser's floating disc.)

The folk of Gullykin don't go looking for such things themselves—to do so, they believe, invites misfortune due to the malice of "those who died and do not sleep." A few residents have bought some items from those who did find them, and will sell them for several hundred gold coins each.

The high field that was once Firewine Bridge is covered in chest-high grass and studded with piles of rubble and small, often hidden, holes dug by treasure-seekers. Somewhere at the bottom of one hole is the way into an underground complex of linked chambers—once the cellars of a trading company—said to hold riches heavily guarded by golems and

other magically animated creatures. The only way to pass these in safety is to use a ward token, which the locals all say they lack. However, such tokens often turn up elsewhere in the Coast lands, for sale at an asking price of several thousand gold pieces. One is pictured in this guide on the previous page—but I must warn travelers that it may not be the true pass token!

The cellars of Firewine Bridge shouldn't be confused with the vaults under Gullykin's brewery, which are used for growing mushrooms as well as for storing casks of brew. Rumors of an underground connection—which may or may not exist—between the brewery cellars and the buried trading company cellars have caused the halflings years of trouble with heavily armed intruders.

The visitor can be assured of being able to buy a tent or two, half a dozen ponies, some wool, as many woolen garments or sheep as desired, and all the foodstuffs a traveler might need. There are no shops in the village, but every villager's in business for himself. The locals like to haggle over prices, but rarely try to outbid each other for a visitor's wants—when one is talking with a visitor, others stay clear.

In general, the halflings of Gullykin seem to like their privacy more than most of the small folk—they like to stroll by themselves, singing or humming or just sitting and thinking, a lot. They seem to avoid loud festivities and roistering and to avoid visitors who try to draw them into such things. Except for the ruins, Gullykin is a pleasantly boring village.



# Qheldin's Mask

This small river hamlet is located on the east bank of the Chionthar halfway between Scornubel and Berdusk.<sup>4</sup> A small fishing, hunting, and farming community, Qheldin's Mask was recently the site of a fine inn, Six Spanglestars, but it burned down some winters ago and hasn't been rebuilt. There's no local accommodation available to travelers now. Qheldin's Mask is known today for the fine riding horses reared on local farms.

The hamlet was founded by Qheldin, the Masked Mage, some 300 winters ago. In his honor, by long-standing custom, women of the hamlet—descendants of the wizard's servants—wear masks at weddings, feasts, and other important occasions. These are usually full-faced masks of black velvet or cotton with eyeholes shaped and decorated like the long-lashed, limpid eyes of a courtesan. The mask edges are adorned as the maker pleases. They are often strung with tassels, tiny brass bells, dangle gems, or nets of sparkling cloth.

Qheldin is long dead. His tower has fallen into rubble, its stones tested once too often by the spells of journeyman wizards seeking hidden magical treasure. Qheldin's tower is haunted by the wizard's ghost, who keeps watch over the overgrown rubble that was once his home. A golem was once found here, and a hollow pillar yielded up some spellbooks quite recently, but the only things regularly dug up are hands-



both dangerous crawling claws that attack their finders, and two sorts of magical items made by the wizard.<sup>5</sup> The site is called the Grove of Hands because of them. Crawling claws lurk and scuttle here amid the trees.

Rumors say the inn<sup>6</sup> also held hidden magic, and since the inn burned down, bands of brigands and adventurers have several times dug up both tower and inn. (As the locals dryly put it, it's often hard to tell the brigands and the adventurers apart.) The inn has yielded up nothing more interesting than a few blackened coins and a snake that had taken up residence in the half-buried cellar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For the location of Qheldin's Mask, see the map in the entry on Asbravn in the chapter on Sunset Vale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>For magical details, see Appendix III of this guide.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>The inn was briefly home to an adventuring band, the grandly named Blue Sword Legion, which never had more than 12 members.



### Scornubel

Scornubel is the Caravan City a sprawling place of warehouses, paddocks, and stockyards. It is a city of traveling merchants with a population that can increase eightfold in a good summer, sixfold during most traveling seasons. It has no walls and is a place of ready swords and watchful residents. There have been more than a few raids on it by bugbears, hobgoblins, and the like, particularly in harsh winter weather, when game is scarce. Thieves and dopplegangers are a constant problem.

This rough-and-tumble place is the closest thing some caravan merchants have to a home. It sprawls along the northern bank of the River Chionthar where the Trade Way meets the waters. From Scornubel's docks a ferry crosses the river. Many skiffs, narrowboats, and barges make runs along the Chionthar as far upstream as Berdusk (where rapids prevent travel onward), as far downstream as Baldur's Gate, and as far up the River Reaching as Hills Edge and a few rancher's docks upstream of it.

Old, sharp-tongued Lady Rhessajan Ambermantle rules the city, assisted by three Lord High Advisors (retired merchants) in consultation with a council of merchants. Her tongue and worldwise stratagems have earned her the title "the Old Vixen," but she's generally loved—or at least respected—among Scornubians. She can whelm a mounted militia and scouts headed and equipped by the Red Shields mercenary company and has a watch of well-trained and well-

equipped soldiers assisted by both priests and mages. The city has many shrines and visiting clergy., but only one temple, the Healing House of Lathander, which is much called upon to heal injured travelers of all faiths.

It's been said the goods and riches of half of Faerûn pass through Scornubel, but the city itself is known as the source of much mutton and wool, medicines concocted by local artisans, merchant services (wagon repairs, moneylending and a barter fair), and the trading, training, and doctoring of mounts and beasts of burden. Businesses and the buildings that house them change from season to season or even more rapidly, and Scornubel has few permanent landmarks. One never need pay for a night's rest unless one wants a bed, bath, or stables-even in cold winter weather you'll see folk burrowing into hay piles to hollow outwarm beds, and on hot summer nights many folk lie down amid their stock in the paddocks, surrounded by saddles and saddlebags to keep the beasts from stepping on them.

#### Landmarks

Scornubel has a few interesting spots<sup>7</sup> the first-time traveler should be aware of buried amid all its many warehouse complexes, all of which bear large badges of the costers or companies they belong to, and so are easily identified. Most of these are clustered around the small, muddy harbor. The rotting, aromatic stalls of the fish market stand beside the ferry dock on the west arm of the harbor. The smithy of Kaerus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>A map of Scornubel can be found in *A Grand Tour of the Realms*, the largest booklet in the revised edition of the Forgotten Realms *Campaign Setting* box, or in the Forgotten Realms *Adventures* hardbound book.



Thambadar and the crowded yards of Arkaras the Shipwright occupy the east arm. Kaerus works mainly on wheel rims and useful ironmongery such as hooks, hinges, hasps, and nails, but can turn out simple armor and weapons. Arkaras is a huge, bearded giant with a perpetual fierce expression who keeps all the river boats running and owns the ferry.

From the harbor roads radiate out in all directions. On the back road of the largest and most prosperous block of shops on the east side of the Trade Way stands Scornubel Hall, seat of the local government. It's the place you can hear all the arguing coming from. It is found three blocks up from the docks, just north of the intersection that borders the Walk, which is an open-air public meeting place and market. Eljan, door warden of the Hall, can give directions to most things and folk.

Some visitors to Scornubel make straight for Mother Minx's, a festhall of some repute, or seek out Angah Lalla, a dealer in curios from far lands who's known all across the Coast lands as a fence for stolen goods, but fewer folk know of the useful and interesting local mages: Buldath Andryn, Chansrin Alum, and Nethmoun Aln. The best way to find any of these three is to leave word at any of the inns or taverns. Their agents will find you and guide you to a meeting. Like many other people in this ambitious, dangerous city the three like secrecy. The traveler may be initially bewildered by all the nicknames, aliases, catch phrases, and passwords in use in Scornubel.

Buldath buys monster remains from

adventurers, packages and preserves them, and sells them as magical components all over the Coast lands through a few very loyal agents. He's a taciturn gentleman, and difficult to get to know well because of it.

Chansrin is a sharp-tongued sorceress who loves adventure. She loves to hurl spells into the midst of any fray in the city, often accompanying the watch on nights when she's bored. She'll leave Scornubel to rescue someone, but wandering the Realms is not her idea of adventure. As she told me, if she stays right where she is in Scornubel, "All the adventure in Faerûn will come to me!"

Nethmoun is a reclusive mage, a softspoken, small-headed and unprepossessing man who keeps to his small, ramshackle hut on the eastern edge of town. The hut is warded, and is guarded by six margoyles, a small forest of magically animated flying daggers, and other, more mysterious magical defenses, including several modified Evard's black tentacles spells. Nethmoun collects rare and unusual spells. If someone uses a magical item or spell he hasn't heard of in the city, one of his agents will contact that person and offer to trade some magical training or magical items for the new item or spell. He usually sends his strikingly beautiful female cook-or a projected image of her.

There are other magical features of interest to the visitor in bustling Scornubel. The wizard and sage Phiraz of the Naturalists is interested in purchasing live monsters or unusual beasts or their relatively intact carcasses. He's an expert on otyughs,



and is engaged in a long-term study of all life on the High Moor.

Scornubel's best lost treasure legend also has to do with magic. Somewhere under the Nightshade nightclub—reached by secret passages from that dim, crowded den of passion, music, and shady dealings—is the crypt of the Wondermen, sometimes called the Wondermakers.

The Wondermen were mages who dared much. They tested the limits of magic, traveled many planes and strange worlds, and in the end they chose to be consumed by magic. Their crypt is said to be guarded by several of them who have become liches, who await the coming of wizards mighty enough to withstand their spell attacks-wizards who will truly deserve to wield the awesome magics they did. If someone flees the crypt with a magical item, the legends whisper, these liches will hunt that person down, not resting until the thief is destroyed and the item has been regained.

The crypt of the Wondermen is said to be crammed with magical rings, wands, rods, gloves, dancing *ioun stones*, and, ringed by the grand catafalques of the Wondermen, a huge crystal sphere that imprisons an eater-of-magic. The sphere can be moved about by means of a hand-sized control sphere resting on a pedestal nearby. If it's released, legend holds, it will roam the Realms devouring all magic until there's not a spell or magical item left. The brute rule of barbarians, goblinkin, and monsters will then overwhelm all civilized folk.

Few have seen the crypt of the Wondermen and lived to tell the tale, though many come to the Nightshade seeking the way to it. The staff claim to honestly not know the way, some swearing that the sliding panel that leads to the right secret passage moves around from time to time by itself.

Many more visitors have seen the most famous magical inhabitant of Scornubel: the Oebelar. This mighty mage perished—or perhaps was merely magically transformed—some thirty-odd years ago. Great tongues of blue-white cold fire consumed his tower one night, and on the next one the silent, floating remnants of the Oebelar first appeared a single shining eyeball, its gaze cold and level, and a blackened hand and forearm. Sometimes these two remnants wander independently but they usually appear together-and can write and gesture, demonstrating that they retain the Oebelar's intelligence.

The eye and the hand have roamed Scornubel every night from then on, gliding silently into the midst of the most private meetings and trysts, the bloodiest brawls, and the coldest of confrontations alike. Word of the silent remains of the Oebelar has spread across Faerûn, inspiring ballads and more than one adventuring band to name themselves the Eye and the Hand.

The Oebelar has become a familiar haunting to Scornubians. Most of them hate his (or its) coldly curious gaze and prying ways—but most of them can't do anything about it, and try to ignore him. Magic seems unable to detect him, keep him out, or harm him. Even the mighty

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>A nishruu, detailed in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting boxed set.





spells of archmages and the undeadblasting powers of senior priests are ineffective, though weapons of steel can hit and hurt the eye and the hand. The Oebelar goes everywhere and takes an interest in everything, and has quite dampened the ardor of many who've eloped to Scornubel.

The traveler is warned that Scornubel remains a dangerous place. Many dark deeds are done in the shadows, and everywhere are intrigues that a visitor can all too easily get caught up in—only to meet with several feet of cold steel in an alley or nightclub doorway

Traditional entertainments in the nightclubs of the city include mock battles (or not-so-mock battles) between well-oiled human acrobats and monsters, monsters that are trained to

dance or do tricks, and monsters that participate in comedy or spell-hurling acts. Tales of various of these performers breaking free and slaughtering some members of the audience who were trying to escape are true!

Dopplegangers, lamias, and other monsters able to assume human form or magical disguises have always dwelt in the Caravan City—and to some extent have been tolerated, if not welcomed, because of their special powers or knowledge, If you're trying to contact a mind flayer, a yuan-ti, or even a beholder and would rather not do it in the trackless wilderness at a grave disadvantage, this is the place to come— if you can't safely go below into the Underdark, where secure meeting places exist, such as Skullport under the great city of Waterdeep.

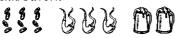
This is also the place outlaws, heirs on the run from assassins, misfits of all sorts, adventurers down on their luck or lacking ideas as to where to go looking for treasure (as well as danger, which seems far more easily found) all come. It's not a place for the fainthearted or the fastidious.

Unfortunately, its ever-changing nature makes the work of a guide hard. Permanent features are few. Some follow in these pages—but the visitor is advised to keep a weapon ready travel in a group and by day only until the city's byways and current intrigues have been scouted, and guard well all open display of wealth. Remember that in Scornubel, information always has a price, and moneychangers are everywhere. Be sure the money they're changing isn't unwittingly yours.



# The Dusty Hoof

Inn/Tavern



This middling establishment stands on the east side of Northstorm Street in the block above the six-way intersection of the Walk. It's unexciting, but relatively safe and comfortable. As the name indicates, it caters to drovers and caravan wagonfolk.

#### The Place

The Hoof is long, narrow, and highceilinged, with the upper reaches of every room always lost in the gloom. (There was a rumor some years back that a stirge got in and lurked aloft for most of a season, flitting down to drink from sleeping guests and then hiding up in the darkness again-until a guest who slept with a hand crossbow handy took care of the menace.) The street level is given over to the taproom, with the kitchen and gaming rooms in the cellar, and the dining room on the floor above. The dining room is closed off at night, and shields the guests trying to sleep on the three floors above somewhat from the noise of late night drinkers. Garderobes, a serving lift, and stairs are all at the back, linking each floor. All rooms lack windows except the front suite on each floor.

#### The Prospect

The clientele of the Hoof leads to it being neither a very sociable nor very unpleasant place to visit. Most of the drovers and caravan folk are tired and hungry of nights, leading more to the sounds of contented munching and murmurs of "More ale" than scintillating dinner conversation. On the other hand, few fights ever break out, as most visitors here fall over into bed almost as soon as they're done eating.

#### The Provender

Food at the Hoof consists of the usual roasts, stews, steamed greens, and—in keeping with the name of the place—something called hoof soup, which tastes rather like broth of old meat cuts with diced old vegetables in it and is supposedly made by boiling the hooves of locally slaughtered livestock. Drinks are the usual ale, wine, sherry, mead, and winter wine. Nothing exotic or outstanding is served.

#### The Prices

Ale is 3 cp per tankard, and everything else is 1 sp per flagon. All food is 2 gp per serving. A serving is a generously heaped oval platter suitable for a large, hungry soldier or field worker. I saw two elves share one. They left food—and they started out hungry, not disdainful of the fare.

#### Travelers' Lore

The cellars of the Hoof are said to connect with old, dry sewers now used for smuggling—passages that lead to warehouses far away across the city.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>A serving lift is a box in a shaft, operated by pulling on a pulley rope by a servant standing in the box. This one is often used for quick escapes by those willing to burn their hands of the rope or take a hard landing at the bottom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Elminster says that hoof soup is indeed made from boiled hooves—with the other ingredients Volo detected thrown in. Dogs bother livestock, the Old Mage notes, so they're not welcome in Scornubel—and so they're too few to devour all such offal. "So," Elminster noted dryly, "for once we have to do it ourselves—eat up, now!"



#### Far Anchor

Inn

iii brr

This large inn sits on the north side of Far Rider Street between Stumblepost Trail and Red Shields Road. It's probably the best accommodation to be had year in and year out in Scornubel. Built by a retired sea captain only 12 or so seasons back, its name refers to its distance by river barge from the Sword Coast.

#### The Place

Large, bright rooms, simply furnished but kept clean, are things to be treasured in rough-and-tumble Scornubel—so this inn tends to be full most of the time. Its rooms have stout

shutters and lack balconies, but this cuts down on thievery and the frequency with which empty bottles are hurled inside of evenings—unless one's foolish enough to sleep with the shutters open.

The communal dining room (the largest in Scornubel) has two watchful guards to keep things peaceful. Folk who aren't staying at the inn can come in and dine for 2 sp per serving. Some folk stay here regularly just for the chance to relax over a meal. Others come because the inn has fewer bugs than elsewhere and is too new and clean to have much room for secret passages and the like. Its indoor garderobes (jakes) were new to the city when the place was built, but their like are found everywhere now.





#### The Prospect

Folk rich enough to have something worth stealing, but not so rich as to have spare coin enough to rent an entire house to stay in or to travel with bodyguards in strength, come here. (Many Scornubians live in one house and rent out their second one to visitors.) Most guests come back a second time if they visit Scornubel again. The cleanliness is one reason—and the baths are another.

At the Far Anchor one can bathe in the privacy of one's own room or in a large and steamy—but warm!—bathing chamber in the cellar. Many wives will stay nowhere else for the latter reason, though one must beware the rather strong and dubious-scented perfumes sold around the city for adding to bath water. They're created to mask the aroma of an unwashed body, and thus even when diluted they're apt to leave the owners of refined noses reeling.

The watchful staff of Far Anchor are all ex-adventurers of many races. All tend to carry hidden weapons and are ready to use them. Ask them if you need anything; they're happy to help.

#### The Provender

No drink is served at the Anchor to keep breakages and brawling to a minimum. The fare is simple, of the roasts, stews, fried potatoes, and steamed greens sort. For the more adventurous palate, river clams, eels, and frogs can all be had fresh and pan-fried in butter.

Cheeses and sausages from all over Faerûn come to Scornubel, and this inn



sells a selection, Of the cheeses, Elturian gray is very popular—though, strangely, I saw little of it in Elturel itself. Halflingmade sausage from Corm Orp is also a local favorite. It's made from squirrel meat, ground nuts, and hogs, and has a distinctive fatty taste.

#### The Prices

A platter (any main dish) is 3 sp. A bowl (any soup or stew) is 2 sp. A plate (river fare or bread) is 1 cp. Cheeses and sausages vary with the going market prices, but are usually 4 sp per wheel for cheese and 1 gp per pound for sausage.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Anchor is too new to have acquired many tales yet. It is said to be haunted, though, by the unseen spirit of a guest stabbed for his money. Guests hear his moans and the noise of clinking coins. His behavior would indicate his hidden coins haven't been found yet.



# The Jaded Unicorn

Inn/Tavern





This ramshackle complex of former warehouses occupies the center of the first block east of the one that has Scornubel Hall at its heart—but aside from position and size, the two places couldn't be more different. This dump is proudly presided over by a life-sized purple unicorn sculpture that some wag—on a dare or a bet, no doubt, and with the aid of a *levitation* spell—has painted the face of with rouge, lip scarlet, and eye shadow to make it look like a cheap courtesan. Somehow it looks fitting.

#### The Place

This place is used rightmindedly only by the desperate and the poor. The small sleeping rooms smell bad and form a warren of mismatched corners and sloping floors, a result of combining warehouses that once had nothing at all to do with each other. "Rat holes," one patron called them, very aptly.

#### The Prospect

The Jaded Unicorn is notorious, even in Scornubel. It's the place where rough sorts go to get killed in brawls—on some nights, the stabbed bodies pile up outside like so much kitchen refuse, hurled out by the cooks with the same careless ease. It's certainly the only place in town that welcomes (well, tolerates) orcs and half-orcs among its clientele—and a lot of elves, dwarves, and humans who come react

with drawn blades. There's a brief flurry, yet another body, and then the drinking goes on. Thankfully, this place has adopted the earthenware tankards used in some other rough houses to keep the fatalities caused by hurled drinks to a minimum.

All of the wild partying that goes on in the taproom, which is usually packed, with patrons standing crowded together elbow-to-elbow, makes it a lousy place to try to catch some slumber. If the din from downstairs doesn't keep you awake, the mutterings of plotters gathered in adjacent rooms will.

#### The Provender

Food in the Unicorn means slabs of salty bread, wedges of cheese, bowls of hare stew, patters of pan-fried trout (not bad), and cuts from a roast cooked in stale beer—and tasting of it. Drinks are the order of the day here—and the stronger and rougher, the better. I advise guests to dine elsewhere, if they must sleep here.

#### The Prices

Thankfully, all of this splendor comes cheap. All drink is 1 cp per tankard, all meals are 2 cp per serving, and all rooms are 2 sp a head per night, with another 1 sp per mount for stabling.

#### Travelers' Lore

Smugglers and snatch bands of local thieves often meet here. Tales abound of thick-skulled, but healthy, youths being taken from here to unwillingly pursue sailing careers elsewhere. Beware!



# The Raging Lion

Inn/Tavern



This large, but rather poorly run, establishment stands on the east side of the Trade Way on the north edge of the city. It has the advantage of a large, well-guarded compound to hold off orc and brigand raids and a location that allows timid guests to avoid entering the city proper—or to leave hastily, riding hard into the night, if need be. It offers the convenience of secure stables handy to the main building, but not much else.

#### The Place

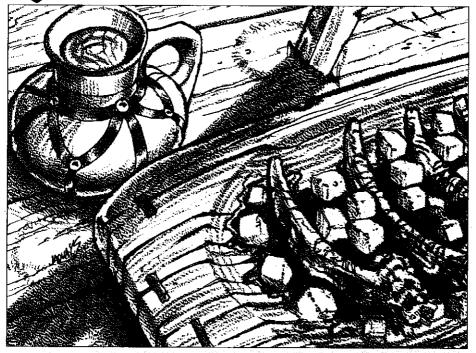
The Lion is dirty and dingy. The lifesized gilded stone lion out front, a reminder of former greatness, is now sadly shabby. A frequent local prank is to place the severed head of a slaughtered hog or the like in the lion's open, snarling jaws. Sometimes such a grisly trophy hides a message for one cabal or another. Once or twice, folk have been murdered in Scornubel and their heads displayed in the lion's jaws as a warning. (A grisly and brutish gesture.) Inside, the inn isn't quite as bad as that-but it's not very exciting, either. The gilded lion's head chamberpots were quaint when I first used them-and they're much older now. . . .

#### The Prospect

The staff members at the Lion pursue a rather unhurried pace, as if the worn-







down look of the establishment had invaded their very being. They are not exactly rude, but they are not on their toes either. They seem perpetually distracted, and a guest may have to repeat a request several times to get action.

#### The Provender

Food at the Lion consists of the usual roasts, stews, and steamed greens fare, with one note of interest: The cook has a personal liking for fried and stuffed snake and will happily prepare a platter of this delicacy for anyone requesting it. He does the snakes in a gravy of poultry stock and almonds, and the result is surprisingly tasty, if a bit rubbery. The kitchen also produces Elturian pheasant tail soup, but small rodents and other found meat may

well find their way into the stock. You have been warned, travelers.

#### The Prices

Rooms are 15 gp a head per night, and stabling is 3 gp extra. Meals cost 2 gp per person for all one cares to eat, including a mug of cheap spiced wine. Other wines cost 10 gp or more per bottle. There's no ale.

#### Travelers' Lore

For years the Lion was home to three rival adventuring bands, who outdid each other in boasting if not in success. One finally found a Netherese ruin and brought back great wealth—but its members were promptly slaughtered by the rest. The gold, hidden here, was never found.



# Serpent's Cowl

This small village sits on the east (or south) bank of the Winding Water upstream of Boareskyr Bridge, near the estate of Heartwing, which is owned by the sorceress Aluena Halacanter, who's famous for the pegasi she rears. Named for the yuan-ti city and temple that once stood here, Serpent's Cowl stands hard by the Forest of Wyrms. It is important today as a ferry crossing at the limits of clear water on the river. Below it, the Winding Water is black and poisonous because of godly battles during the Time of Troubles. The Cowl has always been home to farmers, a few woodcutters who timidly cut along the verges of the Forest of Wyrms in armed parties (parties that keep watch for who-knows-what monsters approaching from the forest depths), and a handful of fisherfolk and bold (local folk use the word *strange*) hunters.

The Forest of Wyrms is named for the great numbers of snakes that slither and coil in its trees, They are thought to be a legacy of the serpent folk who once dwelt where the village stands. Local legend whispers that some day they will return from the depths of the forest. Adventurers report finding no trace of yuan-ti in the forest, but admit their searches have been a little tentative because the forest holds at least half a dozen green dragons-young, smallish dragons that are probably a single brood, but dragons nonetheless-and the dark, overgrown stone tower

known as Lyran's Hold. Lyran was once a mage of note, master of the necromantic arts, and his tower has been a lodestone drawing adventurers from the far corners of Faerûn—adventurers who've perished or, worse still, been seen again as his undead servants, patrolling the wood against intruders, wielding their old magic and weapons as they did in life.

Some villagers say a small, brave band of adventurers recently won through these defenders to destroy the lich—but other adventurers have vanished trying to plunder the Hold since then, and most locals believe undead still rule there. Hunters say serpents, zombies, and skeletons are still numerous in the forest.

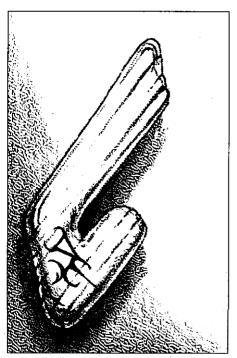
Lyran warded his Hold. Many ward tokens can be had in the village for 100 gp, and one is shown on the following page. The wards ignore the undead, visiting harmful spells only on the living. (Some spells manifest as traps that are unleashed by *spell triggers*.)

Local legend forbids digging cellars or pits in the village for fear of opening a way into the lost cellars of the yuan-ti temple and unleashing the weird monsters said to lurk there. The temple was blasted to rubble by the spells of victorious mages when the serpent folk settlement fell. The yuan-ti wielded magical items of awesome strength seized from Netherese ruins (scepters that blasted or hurled rings of lightning, rings that gave forth rays that burned or fired showers of stinging darts, and staves



whose segments could turn into multiple fighting golems when detached and thrown), and used these to savagely guard the cellars of their temple, where unholy experiments were conducted in breeding and magically altering monsters to produce worse monsters. Records of the battle speak of pale things that resembled bulettes, other pale things like behir, and creatures that resembled giant winged flying snakes and beholders with snakelike, dangling rear bodies.

In the end, the attacking mages brought down the temple atop the yuan-ti, burying them alive. Most believe they survived, though, tunneling down into the Underdark to



Serpent's Cowl Ward Token

escape to the Serpent Hills or tunneling to the surface somewhere in the Forest of Wyrms, which has at its heart many as-yet-unexplored ravines tangled with thickly grown trees and shrubs.

The traveler who's not interested in trudging around a forest known to be endangered by snakes and green dragons will find the village itself small and rather pleasant. The farms around it lack any buildings for the same reason the village is small: Raiding green dragons destroy homes and devour people that are outside the ward that envelops the entire village.

This ward, created after the battle to keep evil dragon-riding mages from directing their mounts to dig up the temple cellars in any attempt to gain the Netherese magic there, keeps all dragons out. Any dragon who comes into contact with the ward is torn simultaneously by *repulsion*, *lightning*, and some form of life-draining curse. This spell is known to affect weredragons and dragons who've used magic to adopt another form.

The ward keeps the stone, turf-roofed, and florally decorated cottages of the Cowl crowded together around a small square. Their gardens and the tracks that lead to the nearby farms radiate out from them. There's but one small guesthouse in the Cowl, the Dusty Dragon, whose owner sells food to visitors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>The effects are *repulsion* (as per the spell, affecting one dragon without saving throw or exception), *light-ning bolt* 18d6 damage except to dragons immune to such attacks), and *energy drain* (which reduces the dragon by one "age" if a saving throw vs. spell fails).



# Soubar

This small trail town is located on the Trade Way south of Boareskyr Bridge. Often raided by goblinkin and bugbears, it's a summer tent town that shrinks to an armed outpost in winter. At its heart is the old stone ruin of a temple or abbey of Bane, known as the Black Abbey. Some folk believe it was once sacred to another god and was only seized by worshipers of Bane briefly. The ruins have yielded stones to build the rest of Soubar.

What remains of the ruins are home to a mysterious woman known only as Mag, who runs a tavern called the Winding Way in them. The word around the Coast is that Mag was once a priestess. Some say she abandoned her calling, others that she embraced another faith and others say she's a mind flayer or other horrible creature (a beholder, perhaps, or even a neogi) who's mastered magic enough to take human form for years at a time.

All that's certain is that Mag answers no questions, has healed folk from time to time, wears a *ring of misdirection* that conceals her true allegiances and powers, and stores broken instruments of torture in the old abbey loft where she sometimes lets travelers sleep. Whether she used spells or potions for healing is a point of contention. Reports on this are confused. All of this makes many merchants uneasy. They camp west of Soubar, or press on past if the weather's fair and the

night apt to be moonlit, rather than stopping here.

Soubar is a lawless town. Visitors should bring their own swordsand be prepared to swing them. There are several Coast lands fireside tales about brigands who buried loot here and were slain before they came back for it. Not all such tales are fanciful. The merchant Janthool of Athkatla, a fartraveled trader in sundries, dug a latrine pit just west of Soubar a spring or two ago and unearthed an ivory coffer crammed full of matched black pearls—each as large as the pommel nut of a stout broad sword! Be warned, however. Digging in certain spots in Soubar summons helmed horrors<sup>12</sup> to the digger, due to an ancient guardian spell of unknown origin!

Folk not wanted in Triel or Boareskyr Bridge find their way here. This has made Soubar something of a hiring fair for brigands, evil mages, dopplegangers, wererats and other werefolk, mercenaries down on their luck, mind flayers, those bearing curses, and others not tolerated in most communities.

Fences for stolen goods are plentiful here. Scurrilous "bounty hunters" who kill, maim, or capture specific beings to order are also plentiful, as are dealers in slaves, information, poisons, chains and cages, sleep venoms, and exotic pets. Kill-trained pets cost twice the usual prices. I'm not (ahem) familiar with any names or details, of course.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Detailed in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting boxed set.



# Tempus's Tears

This small, little-known village rests quietly where the Skuldask Road meets Thundar's Ride in the heart of the Fields. Most folk think it's just a huge, abandoned, ancient stone city, fields upon fields of once-proud towers fallen into rubble and ruin. Its name comes from a standing stone set up at the intersection that bears the words:

Here was peace this day made. Let Tempus cry bitter tears. No more our dead we'll parade And live cloaked in waiting fear.

This stone is believed to mark the spot of one of the parleys that ended a long war—and with it, any hope of creating a northern realm ruled by those Calishite satraps greedy for ever more land to bring under their rule. The date of the struggle, who exactly was fighting (beyond Calishites on one side, and humans already here who wanted to remain free on the other), how long the peace lasted, and who wrote the words on the stone are all lost in the mists of the passing years.

Today, Tempus's Tears is a village of dwarves and gnomes, who live under the ruins in burrow homes. They craft coffers, latches, and satchels, and sell them to certain trusted merchants passing through. Most others don't even know they exist.

A few merchants take a wagonload of stones from the ruins from time to time. If they take too many, dwarves appear from below-ground and politely ask them to put some back. Those who refuse are warned that the ruin's under the protection of Amaeraszantha. If they ignore this, the dwarves summon her.

Amaeraszantha is an amethyst dragon of great size and age who lairs in the collapsed circle of an old temple. The circle is located on an island in a small, stagnant lake at the heart of the ruined city, generally northeast of the meeting of the overland trails. She will respond to a dwarven summons and attack plunderers of the ancient, nameless city. Dwarves can summon her either directly or by use of a vast, buried horn, actually a carved, spiraling tunnel, blown into from below. It issues a low, droning call.

In truth, there's little to find here. One of the reasons a ruin so large is so little known are the failing wards that still affect it, shrouding much of it in mist at all times and causing a few of the shattered buildings to vanish for a time and then silently reappear. They disappear onto other planes or worlds, some sages say. A diligent searcher in the ruins will find it empty of all but rubble, dust, and a few nasty predators that have taken up residence or wandered into the city just as human adventurers do.

Somewhere in these vast ruins, the Great Seer Alaundo said, is the Stone that Speaks. This treasure is eagerly sought by Candlekeep. The



sages of that monastic community have sponsored many expeditions in search of the Stone. It is said to be a hand-sized, nondescript lump of gray rock that contains the imprisoned spirit of a wizard-an archmage who clings to sanity only by a thread, and is apt to be irritable and sarcastic. It yearns to possess a living body again and is shrewd enough to bargain with any information it yields to move it toward its goal, step by tiny step.

The archmage, once of Netheril, knows more of magic than living wizards do. It has some way of hearing what befalls around it, and so has learned many things down through the years since its imprisonment.

It was briefly possessed by the long-ago ruler of Rashemen, Angorl Steelhorn. It was stolen, and later traveled about the Coast lands in the possession of a band of adventurers. In the end they fell here, slaughtered by an argos, and the Stone, flung away in desperation by a dying thief, who vainly hoped it would somehow unleash magic to save the band-lay

for many years alone in the stony loneliness of the ruins. Word of it has come to us from three separate travelers, two of whom were too fearful of it to get close to it. A rival blasted the third by magic, trapping him in an endless, rapid, helpless shapeshifting from one form into another until his heart finally failed under the strain, and he perished.<sup>13</sup>

The spirit trapped in the Stone strives for freedom at all costs, caring nothing about what it promises or brings about in order to get into a living body again. 14 It is treacherous and self-serving in the extreme

The dwarves and gnomes, who dare not approach it, told me the Stone calls out to those who come near, trying to get itself taken away from its current resting place. That transportation is something they don't want. They'll summon Amaeraszantha to prevent it. She also doesn't want the Stone out in the wider world, nor does she desire the flood of treasure-seeking adventurers news of its finding will undoubtedly bring to Tempus' Tears.

<sup>14</sup>Elminster says the steps toward freeing the wizard's spirit that the Stone will try to cause by bargaining are as follows: Take the Stone to a large city; get it into the spell chamber of a male archmage; render that mage unconscious, placing the Stone upon his breast; cut his hand so that it bleeds, and place the hand on the Stone; this will force a possession, freeing the ancient wizard from the Stone. The original mind in the body will war continually against the intruding wizard, causing the body to babble, act erratically, and change its mind from time to time-but mostly, the evil wizard will be in control!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>This now-forgotten 9th-level wizard spell (Elminster tells us) was an involuntary shapechange that could help or slay a foe: The target being had to fail a saving throw vs. spell for the spell to work at all. If the save failed, a cycle of 12 preselected forms began (typically slug, snail, toad, and the like). No form could be assumed that would perish in the surrounding atmosphere (no "fish out of water"), but damage could be suffered if a particular form fell due to its nature (a slug being unable to stay on a branch, for instance) or was struck by another attack. The target had to make a system shock survival roll for each change; any failure brought instant death (and an involuntary return to one's true form). If the saving throw succeeded, the target being gained immunity to that spell, plus an additional 12 permanently gained hit points, and was instantly healed of all injuries and afflictions. The magic shifted all garments and carried gear into the ethereal plane until the transformations were complete or death occurred; items and equipment were not present to crush or drag down tiny forms the target may have been forced into.



### Triel

This small, stockaded way-village is located on the Trade Way north of Scornubel, where that road meets the Dusk Road that swings across country from Elturel to Hill's Edge. To the northeast are the Trielta Hills, quiet, rolling grasslands rumored to contain gold, and home to many small, peaceful gnome and halfling communities.

Triel is ruled by Elvar the Grainlord, so-called because he's obsessed with having enough food to safely survive the winters, when trade virtually ceases along the inland roads. The gates of Triel's log-andboulder village stockade are locked at night-and visitors are expected to be outside, camping in the fields around so they can do their part to keep thieving bugbears and worse away from Elvar's precious grain. The stockade itself is crammed, stacked high, and dug deep<sup>15</sup> with crates, barrels, bins and jugs of preserved vegetables and grain, all sealed, numbered, and meticulously labeled as to their contents. I happened upon a rarity: "1357-2136: Sword Coast Snails, pickled in Firewine/Gift of Baltovar of Neverwinter/Turn every three months/Seals renewed [and then a string of several dates]." Note that the first four numerals denote the year Elvar took possession of this container.

At least Elvar's lucid enough to hunger after news of the wider world outside his well-stocked, fanatically defended pantry. Traders who bring food, firewood, barrels, or sea salt for food preservation or the like will be honored with a feast at Elvar's table—and the villagers are good cooks (and well fed, to boot—but then, how could they not be?).

Be warned. Triel not only lacks anything much useful to the traveler, like an inn, tavern, or decent shop though the villagers seem to have no shortage of money with which to buy anything a merchant might want to sell—but Elvar's also a little, er, unusual about religions. The Grainlord changes faiths almost by the tenday, complete with vestments, hired priests, if he can get them, and rituals. Messengers sent out to Scornubel or Boareskyr Bridge who take too long to return with a hired priest may find the clergy they bring back is already passe, professing a faith now fallen out of favor. Altar building and dismantling at the Cup of Plenty, the shrine Elvar maintains, keeps two carpenters busy day in and day out as the seasons pass.

This whole-hearted leaping from deity to deity makes things very difficult for visitors. It also makes life none too easy on the local priestess of Chauntea—a stubborn little wisp of a thing by the name of Antriera, who quietly sees to the healing needs of the garrison, farmers, and forage patrols Triel sends out. She'll also see to the needs of travelers for very reasonable fees.

More than one adroit visiting thief seeking disguises for later has relieved Elvar of a dozen or more sets

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>It's so underdug that the doors covering cellar stairs are everywhere.





of priestly garb. (Antriera always burns the whip-and-chain vestments of Loviatar before the Grainlord realizes he looks ridiculous in them and gets any funny ideas about creative secondhand uses for them.) Elvar always seems puzzled as to where they go and how he could have misplaced them when everything's so neat. This, of course, goads him into further acts of organization, cleaning, and rearranging—activities he never seems to tire of.

For all his faults, Elvar, a simple soul at heart, is a genius at finding water, creating proper irrigation and drainage, and anticipating weather and crop problems. Folk from troubled Temyr have several times tried to entice him away from Triel with much gold to run their own farms. They are always puzzled as to why he refuses, but Elvar always does so, firmly.

He does give advice and is well paid for it—but he won't travel, so the rest of Faerûn is free of his ability to smell where buried water lies and to dig a well just deep and large enough to draw with little pumping. Triel has two deep, clear wells that have never been known to get low on water due to his skill.

His folk love him, for all his eccentricity. I learned all that I tell here by talking to several of them. If you can stomach all this, or are a dealer in clerical regalia or a creator of new cults, perhaps, Triel may be the place for you—or it may not. Most will pass it by.







# The Backlands



or explorers and adventurers who favor warmer climes than the far, frigid reaches of the Savage North, the Backlands of

the Sword Coast are the largest lawless, monster-haunted Irontier in western Faerûn—unless one goes as far south as the trackless jungles of Chult. Many adventurers and nobles (or other crazed-wits) who hunt monsters for sport come here to wet their blades and gather trophy heads for their walls.

The Backlands are named for their location as seen by coast-dwelling humans. They consist of the sparsely settled (by humankind) lands east of Serpent's Tail Stream, the Forest of Wyrms, and the Trielta Hills; north of the River Reaching; west of the desert Anauroch: and south of the Grevpeak Mountains. Once this area was covered by fertile farms that fed Netheril, a proud and mighty realm ruled by human sorcerers. Netheril's ruinssaid to be crammed with gems, gold, and magic-still lure opportunists to remote, perilous corners of the Backlands every summer season.

Today, the Backlands hold the most powerful elven realms left in Faerûn: Evereska and the Greycloak Hills. They also hold the most fearsome monsters known to walk, slither, trot and crawl openly in the Realms. The beasts in the heart of the Marsh of Chelimber are fierce enough to prevent cruel and haughty cities of yuan-ti and ophidians

in the Serpent Hills from spreading east, and feuding tribes of giants dwell in the Hill of Lost Souls and the Battle of Bones (two craggy areas named for past human struggles). The giants battle endlessly over the rolling grasslands between the two areas.

Tales of lost treasure abound in the Backlands. It is said to lie both in the ruins and tombs of Netheril, and in more recent hoards such as the one said to be dug into the walls of Skull Gorge. Gates also abound. These permanent teleportational areas are often invisible and may even be stranded in midair by the collapse of the buildings in which they were located. At least one such portal links Toril with outer planes where fiends, such as tanar'ri, dwell. Rumor whispers that the elven realms hold an entire network of gates which the Fair Folk use to travel the Realms. Most sages explain the presence of the many monsters in the region and the flourishing game they live on (which would seem far too little to support such a huge number of roving teeth and claws, but far too plentiful for those monsters to be eating much) through the existence of many gates that bring continual supplies of fresh beasts into the Backlands from somewhere else.

The traveler is advised to come well armed in a strong party of battle veterans whose ranks include both mages and priests of power. Reliable guides to the Backlands are few, especially now that the Zhentarim have begun to run





caravans through the area from Yellow Snake Pass to bases along the Delimbiyr. These caravans have hired away or killed off many of the hunters who formerly roamed the area. Elven guides, once happy to permit small human expeditions into certain areas, have responded by preventing all human entry into Evereska and ceasing all aid, including guide services. The monsters seem as plentiful as ever, and fresh bones of hired guards trying to get caravans safely past the beasts are so numerous as to litter the ground in some places.

As so often happens, humans have responded to increased danger by charging into the area in ever-growing numbers. Monster hunters based in Hill's Edge and Boareskyr Bridge do a thriving trade in preserved monster parts and caged live specimens, which they collect on wide-ranging expeditions into the Backlands. The Marsh of Chelimber holds the largest known concentration of catoblepas in the Realms, for instance, and the northeastern end of the Sunset Mountains is home to a realm of leucrotta—a collection of rival packs of this notoriously unpleasant beast.

Every year, new rumors of treasure found sweep the Sword Coast. Sometimes the treasure is simply uncovered by the fierce storms that often lash the area, causing flash floods in normally dry basins and ravines. Sometimes a group of adventurers uncovers a small ruin or a scrub farmer turns up a chest or jug when plowing. Each year's crop of



treasure rumors goads wealthy interests in Amn and Waterdeep to sponsor fresh expeditions in search of the latest chance to gain some part of the magical might of Netheril. A single find of a new type of magical item or even a useful spell can make someone a lifelong fortune.

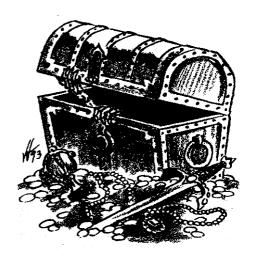
Settlements in the Backlands are few. It's not a place for the casual traveler. Those who enter the depths of this largely unexplored, trackless region must be prepared to forage for their own food and fight, more or less continuously, to keep from becoming someone else's food. The safest area of the Backlands, if there can be said to be such a thing is along the borders of the elven holdings. Although hopeful predatory monsters gather there, the elves mount strong patrols, employing magical flight, spells, and enchanted weapons as well as battle skill, and keep the area fairly clear. They don't always come to the aid of nonelves whom they observe beset by orcs or other monsters, but I've noticed that they usually respond to those who make the old elven hand signs for Greeting and Call for Assistance.

To sign for Greeting, extend both arms—hands empty—straight up over one's head, thumbs together, and then bring the arms forward in an encircling motion. Repeat this at least three times before letting one's arms fall. The motion can be repeated several times.

The Call for Assistance can be preceded by an attention-getting ululation—a high-pitched chattering scream or swooping two-note warbling something like a continuous repetition of the sound small boys make while beating their chests and pretending to be a bull ape

from the jungles of Chult (the most common caged animal seen in the cities of the Sword Coast). This could be described as setting one's voice as high as it will go, and then dropping one note, and then back up, as fast as possible: "Uhh-ohh-uhh-ohh-uhh-ohh" and so on. At night, some elven patrols will respond to this sound alone. Those planning treacherous use of this cry should remember that elves don't need light to see the positions and deeds of humans.

The Call is signaled by raising one arm, holding it upright as far as the elbow, and waving the forearm in one direction only (not from side to side, as most humans do), from where one's hand is just above one's face, down to where the hand covers the chest, and then back up, repeating rapidly As with the Greeting' the hand must be empty. Only one arm should be used, although repetition is understood as an added indication of urgency. Remember that wise travelers never have to rely on anyone else for assistance.

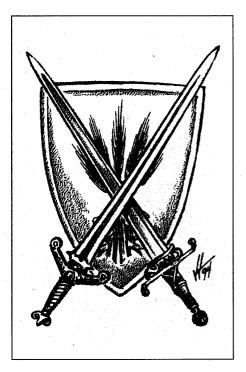




#### Drawn Swords

This small village occupies a solitary crag. The crag is located just east of Northdark Wood and halfway between the Hill of Lost souls and Hill's Edge. Northdark Wood is called by some the Dusk Wood and by others Reluvethel's Wood, after a famous elven ranger who once hunted in it. This forest is east of the Trielta Hills, and is the most northerly arm of the Reaching Woods, separated from the others by the Dusk Road.

Drawn Swords is named for several hard-fought battles here in the past, plus the vigilance that all who dwell there must maintain if they're to live long enough to see another morn. In the past, a combined human and elven



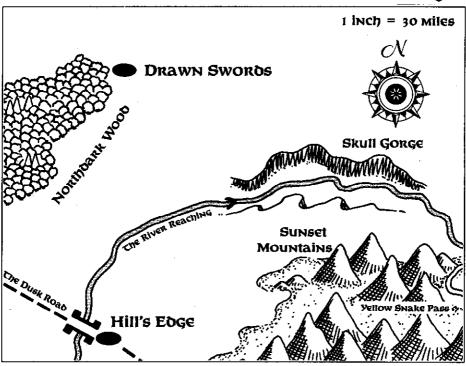
force smashed an orc realm at this location. In another past battle, elves put humans planning to found a realm of their own to flight.

From the distance, the traveler will see a broken stone tower atop a steep crag. The tower is surrounded by a ring of trees and a few unfenced cultivated plots. The tower is an old robber-knight's keep, now partly in ruins. The keep at the crest of the crag (called Swordskeep) provides a lookout, a shelter for food stores, and an armory. The local farmers and hunters, who dwell in stone-and-sod cottages on the steep slopes of the crag, retreat here when beset by large orc tribes, raiding trolls, and the like.

The village numbers perhaps 80 folk, about 20 of whom are usually off hunting. The village keeps a constant watch for approaching creatures of all sorts, and can muster over 40 expert archers. The usual defense of this often-attacked village is to fire volleys of arrows, retreat up the slopes to the next ring of cottages, fire all the arrows there, retreat again, and so on. Each home has at least eight quivers of 20 shafts each hung up just inside the door for easy access in a hurry. At least two quivers will be fire arrows, their shafts wrapped in cloth that has been soaked in pitch and is ready for lighting with a firebrand.

A giant triple crossbow set up on the top surviving floor of the tower can hurl its bolts far enough to surprise many an enemy and hard enough to pierce three trolls standing one behind the other. Shafts are often set aflame just before firing in order to





illuminate enemies attacking by night or to slay trolls.

It's surprising that such a small, isolated village has an inn, but the place serves as a base for many adventuring bands and a group of guides and swords-for-hire. This last group is known as Saern's Sharp Swords. Their founder and original leader, the warrior Saern, was killed over 20 winters ago in a winter skirmish with hobgoblins north of the village.

The importance of the village, the existence of the inn, and the inn's Harper defenses and probable ownership are due to an ancient *gate* located in a room of its own on the ground floor of the old keep. The gate appears as a shimmering blue upright oval of

silent, dancing, cold fire. This two-way portal operates continuously. It allows regular supply shipments to reach the village. The gate also permits the constant passing back and forth of adventurers and hunters wanting to quickly reach the heart of the Backlands or Northdark Wood, which offers splendid bear and stag hunting. The operation of the portal also permits a constant flow of captured monsters or the trophies of slaughtered monsters from the frontier to Berdusk. Everything from heads and antlers to exotic innards destined for sale by apothecaries and purveyors of magical ingredients passes through. Berdusk then offers both overland and riverborne connections for travel and trade.



### Landmarks

There are two tourist attractions within easy reach of Drawn Swords. Remember, however, that orcs and the like watch the village, waiting for prey to come to them, so "easy" refers to distance, not safety or a leisurely trip.

One is sacred to worshipers of Sune Firehair, the Lady of Love. Her worshipers often make pilgrimages to it. Known as the Flame Stone, it is a huge upright stone as tall as two adult human males that stands in a grassy glade on the eastern edge of Northdark Wood, within sight of Drawn Swords crag.

On Midsummer Nights, or when Sune wills, the stone glows with a vivid, orange-red, flickering radiance, resembling a leaping tongue of flame from a distance. Touching it then-if one is a worshiper of Sune-is said to heal all diseases, curses, illnesses, wounds, and wastings. Good fortune is said to come from feasting and kissing in its presence at all times, so the Flame Grove is the site of many uninhibited revels by Sune-worshipers. Most come in summer, when dancing and frolicking in scanty dress all night is relatively comfortable—but some brave souls come here in winter.

Whenever the grove is in use, Stag Warriors guard the revelers from predators. These Stag Warriors are hired warriors commanded by priests of Sune. They wear helms adorned with antlers—apt to be awkward when plunging through trees, I'm told. There are at least six Stag Warriors on duty every night that worshipers have made offerings to the priests of Sune in Drawn Swords, and usually twice that number

are present. Sometimes there may be as many as 20 Stag Warriors on duty.

These defenders normally ring the grove, facing outward at least 10 paces into the forest. Young worshipers and bridal couples often use the grove alone, without warning anyone. Their gnawed bones and gore tell their foolish fate to the next folk to venture into the grove without the protection of the Stag Warriors.

Stag Warriors earn 4 gp each per night. As can be expected, there are often several penniless hireswords staying in the village and awaiting a chance for this duty, foraging for food in the meantime.

The other nearby landmark lies halfway between Drawn Swords and Skull Gorge. Used as an occasional encampment by travelers ignorant of its legendary defenders or confident of being able to handle them, it's called Fallen Giant Tomb.

In ancient times, a great chieftain of the mountain giants, whose name has been lost, perished. His grieving followers carved a stone ridge into a semblance of his sleeping form. Much cracked and crumbled by the years, it remains an impressive, serene form over 200 feet long. There are the inevitable legends that it rises up to slay folk nearby on certain nights, but adventurers who've camped there tell me that the sculpted stone never moved. They warn, however, that if any blood-even from already-existing wounds or uncooked meat—is spilled on the slopes of the ridge or upon the stone form itself, four or more undead skeletons of mountain giants armed



with spiked clubs erupt from the earth and seek to slay any living creatures who don't flee the ridge immediately.

These guardians also appear whenever anyone digs on the ridge. There seems to be an endless supply of them. One old ranger claimed to have personally destroyed over 30 of them over the years. No one can excavate without continuous interruptions from erupting undead.

The giant chieftain is buried somewhere under the stone that bears his likeness. The way down to his tomb, which was presumably covered over by the giants who buried him, has been since totally obscured by time or deliberate working of the ground and is completely lost. The dwarves, giants, and elves all have tales of this tomb, tales that are surprisingly detailed—and in agreement about all of these details. The giant lies buried beneath a bodyplate of solid, *everbright* silver, resting on a bed of stacked golden ingots, with his magical war hammer on his chest

Each ingot must be worth over 100 gp if the descriptions of their size are true. There must be at least 2,000 of them in the tomb, and probably two or three times as many. Thrice war parties have found the buried giant and borne away his enchanted weapon, retreating from taking all the gold because of the undead guardians.

The war hammer is as large as a siege ram, but flies by itself, so people who can't lift it can wield it by touching it and willing it to accompany them. They tow along the floating hammer rather as a mage can direct a *Tenser's* 

floating disc. The war hammer can be directed to fly at an opponent, but it does this only six times before flying away to return to the tomb, which reseals itself.

## Places of Interest in Drawn Swords

INNS

The Sword and Dragon

iiii bbb

This inn is built of stone and is apt to be drafty and icy-cold in winter. Any stay here is interesting, however—the place always holds armed adventurers drinking and spinning wild yarns, and caged monsters usually sit in storage cellars under the inn, awaiting transport to Berdusk. From time to time, one of these captured beasts escapes, and the village has an anxious time until it's slaughtered or caged again.

The inn is connected to a stable that is set below it down the steep cragside, and here the inn staff members swap and sell a good variety of mounts. The staff members also sell food and travelers' gear.

The inn is owned by anonymous Berduskan interests, and the staff is rotated back to Berdusk every month. This means that a particular acting innkeeper will be in Drawn Swords every third month. The owners are thought by most around the Coast lands to be Harpers—chiefly because of who appears to defend the inn whenever Zhentarim seek to take control of the village.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>At THACO 4 and 4d4 points of damage—6d4 points to large (or bigger) size foes.



### Evereska

This verdant valley and walled city of the elves is the greatest known concentration of moon elven Fair Folk remaining in Faerûn— beautiful, cultured place of beauty where few are welcome. Evereska vale is encircled by supposedly unbreathable mountains and can only be entered via gate, through a narrow, well-guarded cleft east of the Halfway Inn, or from aloft.<sup>2</sup> There are rumors of gate linkages with Waterdeep, the island elven realm of Evermeet, and ruined Spellgard.<sup>3</sup> Elven archers patrol the skies on giant eagles to prevent unwanted intrusions, and wards of the strongest sort prevent teleportation into or out of the vale. If there are any pass tokens to these wards, they are kept very secret.

Some sages believe the vale is defended by the magics of the elven deity Corellon Larethian himself. Its defenses certainly do include bolts of hurled magic that strike from the sky to smash hostile armies. Few beings venture within 10 miles of the foothills of the Evereskan mountains without being seen by the elves of one of the many evervigilant watchposts and mobile patrols.

Don't expect to get into Evereska unless you have legitimate business and are an elf—or can persuade an elf to escort you in. Harper pins are usually known to grant passage unless there's evidence they're carried by a non-Harper. Dwarves, half-orcs, and the like are usually not admitted, whatever their aims.

Most trade between Evereska and the

nonelven world is carried on at the trading compound of the Halfway Inn, constructed for that very purpose. Elves do not welcome strangers into their city or their homes, and won't grant a tourist or merchant passage into the vale just because she or he wants to see its glories.

And those glories *are* considerable. I've seen them briefly and can report a gardenlike series of lawns and wooded terraces interlaced with crystal-clear streams that link spill pools and fountains. Birds, cats, and small forest creatures are numerous, and music is heard here and there. Splendid tall houses with many spires and balconies rise up through the many huge, old trees. These trees are mainly duskwood and bluetop, but almost all varieties can be seen in the vale.

Even the poorest, most crowded streets are clean, beautiful, and luxurious by human standards. It is on these streets that artisans live and work close together, sharing the use of a public park rather than enjoying their own private grounds. Imagine an entire city about as splendid as the royal palace and gardens of Suzail—or the best areas of Silverymoon, without any of the cobblestones or crowding—and you'll begin to see what it must be like.

Amid all of this splendor are temples to all of the elven deities, the Evereska College of Magic and Arms, and palatial noble estates. The Evereska College is a training academy of the highest standards. The training it provides is one of the reasons that Evereska is so well

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The general location of Evereska can be seen on the map in the entry on the Halfway Inn, later in this chapter. <sup>3</sup>See FR13 *Anauroch* and FOR4 *Code of the Harpers*.



defended. Harpers are the only nonelves who can normally get training at arms or magic in Evereska, although the occasional half-elf, if of sufficiently exalted parentage on the elven side, may be taught.

The palatial estates are home to powerful and ancient noble families. The cold, sneering pride of these elven families is the greatest weakness of Evereska, and the prime reason most nonelves wouldn't want to enter the vale. The haughtiest of the elves even look down on elves of their own race whose lineages aren't as exalted as their own. Their contempt for elves of other races is usually open, and their abhorrence of nonelves loud and ostentatious.

Some haughty elves have gone so far as to move their estates as far away as possible from places most often visited by humans. These places include Moondark Hill, where human worshipers of Solonor Thelandira come, and the Unicorn & Crescent, an inn that welcomes Harpers, the Heralds, and the Chosen of Mystra on the rare occasions when such visitors are in the city. (Incidentally, these are places I couldn't visit, and therefore can't rate.)

Elves of Evereska need little from the outside world. Most of what they want comes under the heading of pursuing hobbies, from collecting coins or weapons from places as far afield as Zakhara, to breeding experiments, to collecting magic.<sup>4</sup> (Sometimes Evereskan noble elves are thought to manipulate humans into marriage and watch the results from afar by magic.)

In exchange for items or equipment



needed for the pursuit of their hobbies, they usually sell baubles: the tinkling blown glass and metal wind sculptures that hang in trees making soft music in the breezes from one end of the vale to the other; tiny ornamented, sapphireadorned, silver-bladed throwing daggers and belt knives that are much favored as hidden defenders among noble ladies all over Faerûn; vintages considered too poor for Evereskan tables; and small poems set down in exquisite calligraphy on slabs of ivory or the like in delicate hanging frames. The occasional spell scroll or glowing globe is the most magic they'll willingly sell. Sages, thieves, and artisans from all over Faerûn would give much to see more of the glories of Evereska.

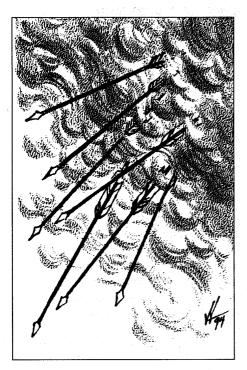
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>"All crass and misleading oversimplifications, of course," says Elminster.



## The Greycloak Hills

Once known as the Tomb Hills, these high, grass-girt hills were settled by the elves of Evereska a few decades ago, ostensibly to deal with the many banshees there. Now they're always cloaked in mist—part of a powerful ward that warns the elves of intruders and negates certain magics. The name *Greycloak Hills* comes from these mists and the gray cloaks worn by the elves dwelling there, who call their land *Greyhome*.

There's little for a traveler to visit Greyhome for, now that strong elven patrols block all access to the magicrich tombs of the Fallen Kingdom. These patrols are sometimes bolstered



by the Walker in the Mists, a golem formed, those who've fought it swear, from solid mist!

In the Fallen Kingdom, adventurers in earlier years found tomb after tomb of long-dead warrior-kings, both human and elven. Most folk in Amn. Baldur's Gate, and Waterdeep, where many such forays were sponsored, believe the elves wanted to seize the riches and magic for themselves. Maskar Wands, head of the noble Wands family of Waterdeep that is famous for its mastery of magic, has said publicly he believes powerful Netherese magic was found in the Greycloaks—perhaps an entire fortress or city-and the elves felt they must possess it to strengthen Evereska, prevent a stampede of greedy and wellarmed humans into the hills, and keep the magic out of the hands of the Zhentarim, whose forces and caravans probe ever more often at the defenses of both Evereska and the Greycloaks.

Rumors in the Halfway Inn speak of elven warriors training extensively in the high meadows of Greyhome and of magically aided digging going on there. The digging is rumored to be the construction of cavern homes for the elves to retreat to should they be driven out of Evereska, since Zhentarim and orc attempts to tunnel into the rich vale grow more numerous every year. The elves could also be excavating Netherese treasures, of course.

Travelers and adventurers beware: The elves aid visitors they favor by offering an empty barrow tomb as a camping place, but deal harshly—that is, fatally—with those they deem tomb robbers.



## Halfway Inn

Despite its name, this establishment is far more than an inn. It is more a community to which the name of the inn is applied. Why it's called "Halfway" I'm not sure, but the general consensus is that it's "halfway to anywhere"—except Evereska. Halfway Inn functions as a tavern, stables, and storehouse, and as the center of a caravan camping area and trading compound used by all who want to trade with the elves of Evereska

Most humans are never allowed to even see that fabled valley and city. This prohibition accounts for the popularity of the latest in Evereskan exports: exquisitely painted views of gardens, mansions, and temples of the city of Evereska. These paintings are truly beautiful, with vibrant colors, charming scenes, and magics that preserve them and make them glow so that they can seen even in darkrooms. Small cantrips on the most expensive of these pictures make small birds, squirrels, and the like appear and wander through the scene augmented, very rarely by an armored elf or gowned lady gliding along in the background shadows or appearing from time to time in the windows of a castle turret or on a balcony Such pictures sell for 400 to 6,000 gp, depending on size, subject, and enchantments.

Trade at the Halfway Inn is a two-way process. For their part, the elves of Evereska, preoccupied with defending their vale and the nearby Greycloak Hills against an increasing Zhentarim presence, have begun buying the finest horses they can get.

This sort of trade keeps the Halfway Inn busy. Adventurers use it as a base to explore the lands around (though they're no longer welcome in the elven-held Greycloak Hills), merchants and mercenaries gather here, and the few elven-led caravans assemble here for trips to Secomber, Waterdeep, Berdusk, Neverwinter, Silverymoon, or Baldur's Gate (rarely elsewhere). Humans, elves, half-elves, dwarves, and halflings are all seen here often. The presence of the compound has encouraged halflings to settle in the woods around, and the smell of rumored gold finds on the Lonely Moor has drawn the dwarves.

The Halfway Inn stands in a small forest, just west of a narrow, heavily guarded cleft that offers the only way into Evereska for those who can't fly. (Other paths lead out of Evereska to the north and south.) The visitor will find a wide wagon trail leads from the west into a large open area divided into camping areas, each with two paddocks and a spring-fed horse pond, by a radial array of warehouses. An open assembly ground spreads out to the south; a trash dump and a wagon repair works lie beside it The easternmost building, at the back of this bustle, is the Halfway Inn.

## Places of Interest in the Halfway Inn

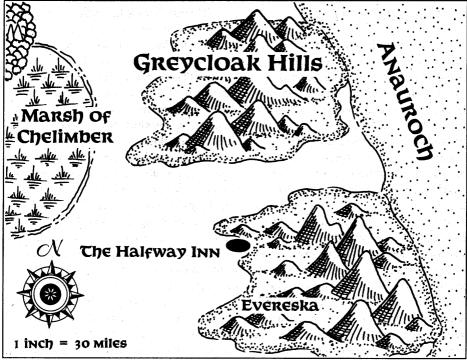
INN/Tavern

The Halfway Inn

Stoutly built of wood and stone, the inn has a dark appearance from the front. It almost seems to blend into the trees

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster says some of the elves of Evereska have traveled widely and might well have heard our expression "I'll meet you halfway"—and named the inn for that as a quiet elven joke.





around it. Long candle lamps light the entrance brilliantly

The visitor can readily see the attached stables on the north end of the building. They're "self-service"-style stables, but warded to chime a tiny hostler's bell if entered from outside. The bell doesn't sound if they're entered from the inn.

Stepping inside the inn, the visitor finds a dark lobby with a doorwatcher and a cloak room. The doorwatcher is usually one of the pretty elven barmaids, glad to be off her feet for a time. Behind the raised front of her desk she has a foot gong to summon armed aid, and a hand cross bow that fires sleep-envenomed darts.

Beyond the desk, a broad archway opens into the tavern room, the heart of activity in the Halfway Inn. This dimly lit,

many-pillared room fills the entire ground floor of the inn except for the stables to the north and the kitchens to the south. The ground floor room has over a dozen round tables by the bar, but most patrons prefer the heavily curtained booths that open off the main room all along the north wall, the east (or back) wall except at the exit, and the south wall once one is past the bar. At least one booth is known to have a secret passage connecting it to the cellars below, the back hall, and a linen closet on the floor above.

The booths have tables, built-in seating, and curtains that completely conceal those inside when drawn together. The back or east end of the room is deliberately kept dark for privacy, and the rest of



the room is "cozily lit for reasons of discretion," as one of the staff put it All this is because most elves don't like strong light and the other patrons are busy *not* being seen. The inn is always abuzz with dealmaking covert meetings, and whispered intrigues.

A broad wooden stair with several shield-hung landings rises up from the main tavern room to the two floors of sleeping rooms above. The inn's third floor consists of a single suite of rooms right up among the trees, and the suite is almost always occupied by visiting elves.

The rear exit to the tavern room opens into a back hall with a stair to the sleeping floors, the entrance to the stables, and a back door. All three are much used by guests who don't want to be seen leaving or going to their rooms—and by local professional escorts. The Halfway Ladies (not part of the inn staff, but known to them and allowed free run of the place) are notorious for their high-class dress and manners. They're mostly moon elves who pretend to high rank, though a doppleganger once slipped into the roster for a tenday.

The inn serves good food, has a surprisingly wide selection of cheeses from all over Faerûn, and offers a broad, well-stocked cellar of good wines. The beer is robust, even nutty in flavor, and the zzar will catch most Waterdhavians by surprise. It's been strengthened to elven tastes, ending up as an almond-flavored strong sherry.

The inn is run by the discreet and trustworthy Myrin Silverspear, though I suspect it's owned and run by the rulers of Evereska, not Silverspear himself The inn staff consists of old veterans, who see

to the stables, furniture, and brawls, and a selection of pert, pretty fast-moving elven barmaids. The moody, haughty or brooding sorts of elves don't apply for this position. The Halfway specializes in getting the cheery, bouncy sort, all tinkling laughter and deft dancing around patrons while carrying flagons balanced to the ceiling. They keep the drinkers well supplied downstairs and keep the rooms upstairs clean and comfortable, if unspectacular.

The inn's decor and appointments are definitely rustic, with chamberpots instead of garderobes. An ewer of water, some fruit, and a jar of biscuits are placed in every room. Cats pad everywhere within and about the inn, keeping the mice down.

The Halfway Inn is a welcome haven to many travelers. Long may it remain so.





## The Marsh of Chelimber

The tale of this vast wetland's creation is known to every youngling in western Faerûn.<sup>6</sup> The elementals who ran amok, spreading the Winding Water to flood all the lands of Prince Chelimber, and the warring wizards whose spell battle released them are all long gone, but there are fresh tales about just where Chelimber's flooded halls lie every spring, as a new lot of hopeful adventurers brave the bogs and lakes of the waiting, mistshrouded Marsh. Most of the tales say Chelimber and his courtiers are now aquatic undead who guard the prince's huge hoard of gold and silver, dragging intruders who get too close to their flooded hall down to a watery grave. The existence of this hoard is said to be proven by the silver goblet brought to Waterdeep in triumph by the adventuress Andlazara 70 winters ago. Its handle is the snarling boar of Chelimber.

Sensible travelers don't need fear-some tales of undead to keep well clear of the marsh. It's a long trek off the trade roads, and it offers stinking mud, quicksand, and clouds of stinging flies, to say nothing of catoblepas, water spiders, water snakes, lizard men, gulguthra, and similar dangers to the traveler. No known trails safely cross the vast, mist-shrouded, dank maze of water and little islets. There's little to go there for, either, unless one is a mer-

chant trying to capture a marsh monster for a wealthy collector or kill one for the yield of its carcass in magical components.

Some people enter the marsh in search of plants, as some marsh plants have medicinal uses, though few bring high prices. One can also live on marsh fish, though they tend to taste unpleasant at best. A few hunters make a living by throwing weighted nets over groups of marsh fowl from the relative safety of the marsh verges or use poles, safety ropes, and shoe pads' to gather marsh bird eggs for food or sale. Some eggs are the size of a large human's head!

Yet there's a lot of marsh to yield such things. It's as large as nearby Evereska and the Greycloak Hills combined, and of a size with the Serpent Hills. Its spreading waters flooded a large realm and may hold many riches, plus treasure known to have been hidden in the bog in recent years by brigands and by desperate dwarves fleeing orcs.

Several travelers who blundered into the heart of the marsh have reported a wondrous sight: a castle floating in the air, hidden by the mists until one is near. Obviously damaged in the spell battle that created the marsh, it hangs upside down, close to the ground—but is now home to a huge swarm of stirges that pours forth to overwhelm creatures who come too close.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>See the "Western Heartlands" chapter in A Grand Tour of the Realms in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting box for this tale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Shoe pads are shoes that are attached to curved plates like miniature coracles for the feet. They allow a skilled poler to walk atop the bog or water.



# The Well of Dragons

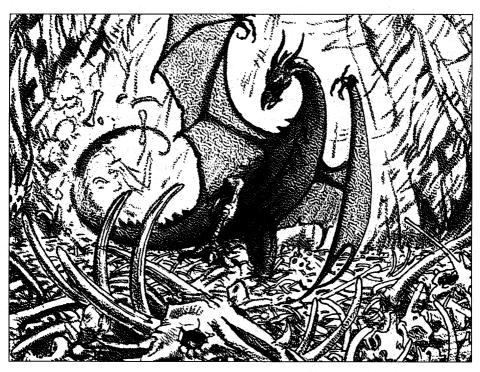
Many folk have heard fireside tales about this place—but most folk in the Realms think it's purely a bard's fancy, a mythical place designed to add color to a ballad or tale. A few starry-eyed adventurers have gone seeking the Well, notably some well-heeled young noble sons of Water-deep. Those who returned say they found nothing like it in all the Backlands. Yet I have seen it, and can set down here for the first time details of this wondrous sight.

The Well is a deep pit concealed by illusory terrain except during moon-

light, due to powerful shadow magic<sup>8</sup> It's a vast natural cauldron, probably once a volcano. Its circular opening is as big across as the length of many respectable villages. There's a little meltwater- and spring-fed lake at the bottom—and bones, heaps and heaps of bones.

Here many dragons have gone to die. Amid their huge, tumbled bones adorned with treasure they wore or bore here lies the guardian of the place—the Dire Dragon. (I saw gems as large as human fists, magical amulets and rings, and more!) The Dire Dragon is a shadow dragon that by misfortune of spell or exposure to magical items achieved undeath. If its words can be

<sup>8</sup>The locations of the Well of Dragons and the nearby ruined village of Ladydove are shown on the map in the entry on Hill's Edge in the chapter on the Sunset Vale, later in this guide.





believed, it did not achieve this status through any deliberate process.

The Dire Dragon is unusually large, and its shadow magic is mighty indeed. Not only does it keep the Well hidden, it has slain no fewer than eight archmages who came seeking its treasure. It showed me their bones proudly. "Spread the word, manling," it said with a cynical gleam in its eyes, "and there'll be more, as sure as night follows day Dragons think, but humans charge in—and for all of us, greed kills."

I saw a cavern mouth in the side of the bone-strewn pit, probably used by the Dire Dragon as a sleeping lairbut I've no idea if it continues to other caverns or is a dead-end hole. The Dire Dragon keeps the most useful and powerful magic brought by dying dragons there, leaving only the baubles out in the pit. Most dying dragons who reach the pit simply dive down to shatter themselves against the rocks and bones. Some like to talk away their last hours, and the Dire Dragon talks to them, learning what it can of hoarded treasure, battle tricks, spells, and the like. Others never reach the Well. If the Dire Dragon's scrying magics detect them-it often keeps watch around the Well-it goes out and brings their bodies to the Well.

About a mile east of the pit, amid wooded ravines and rock outcrops, there's an inn called the Dire Dragon. The inn is all that remains of the half-elven village of Ladydove, burned and laid waste to by the Dire Dragon. It's

guarded against its namesake, all other dragonkind, and most brigands by a powerful ward. This invisible magical barrier teleports two gargoyles wherever the innkeeper commands. These guardians fight for the innkeeper with absolute loyalty.

The ward also reflects back all breath weapons, and drains life force from all dragons (even if they've adopted another form) and all who bear metal weapons. There must be a ward token to prevent harm when using metal tools, but I've not seen it.

### Places of Interest Near The Well of Dragons

lnns

The Dire Dragon

SSSS BBB

This small, rustic stone inn is apt to be chilly and damp. It sees few guests, but has a certain charm, and is run by the greatest living sage on matters of dragonkind, the Calishite lady Yajandra Dlathaero. What brought her to this desolate spot was the chance to study the dragons, using her very powerful scrying magic.

The rooms here are tidy and insect free, and each features a lofty comforter of a different quilting pattern to stave off the chill. Yajandra sets a good table of hearty food. She always appreciates a gift of good wine, beer, or liquor. Try her spicy frog stew.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Draining dragonkind of 6+1d12 hit points per round (no saving throw). All other creatures take 6+1d4 points of damage per round (saving throw for half damage), and their damage can be healed, whereas dragonkind hit point losses are permanent. Throwing away a metal weapon or tool ends damage at the end of the round of release.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>If the DM desires, Yajandra knows everything in the FOR1 Draconomicon sourcebook.



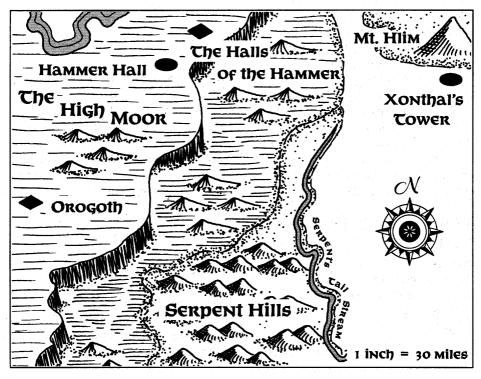
## Xonthal's Tower

This small, remote village is nestled on the southern slopes of Mt. Hlim. Here about 40 folk eke out a living by hunting, fishing along the northern verges of the perilous Marsh of Chelimber, and raising sheep and goats on the high mountain meadows. They keep to themselves, hoping to escape attacks from the yuan-ti and ophidians of the Serpent Hills, but do offer beds to travelers seeking Evereska or a way through the Greypeak Mountains.

The village has little to offer the traveler, but because the village serves as a waystop for overland traders, the Zhentarim recently established an agent here, one Hansibal Droun, who runs a hardware shop and a swap-mount stables. He

brought with him a roving guard of a dozen Zhentilar to "defend" the village. All of them veterans of the Moonsea Wars, and most of them are expert archers. They take their duties seriously because, one old man told me, the Zhents often send wizards about in disguise to make sure their local agents do well. Travelers who aren't friendly to the Zhentarim should keep quiet about it. Most of the villagers are now in the pay of the organization.

Xonthal's Tower began as a cluster of servants' and apprentices' homes built around the solitary black stone tower of the wizard Xonthal. Xonthal is believed to be the first Faerûnian to have mastered the feather magic of Maztica, the Land Across the Sea, becoming a plumaweaver





(if I have the term correctly). He also rose to archmage status wielding the more familiar spells blessed by Mystra.

Unfortunately, his studies seem to have affected his wits. He threw out all of his apprentices about 60 years ago and laid enchantments on the hedge around his tower gardens. The hedge attacks intruders and has all the powers of the horrible monsters known as living walls. Xonthal himself is said to have become a lich—but as no one has seen him for a long' long time, that may be mere speculation.

Locals recall three separate Zhentarim attempts to breach the tower' the last involving nine black-robed mages rumored to have come from Darkhold who stood on empty air a hundred feet or more aloft and hurled spells at Xonthal's stronghold thick and fast. As one local put it, "They lit up the night. I've never seen so many spells before, not even in the big battles in Tethyr with all the mages hurling lightning at both armies!"

In the end, somehow, Xonthal prevailed. Two of the mages were blown apart, and another mage flew away screaming' blazing like a torch. The others fled. Word of this spread rapidly in the Coast lands, and fewer adventurers have come calling on Xonthal's hungry hedge since then.

# Places of Interest in Xonthal's Tower Shops

Droun Trading

Mounts and General Gear

5 5 5 5 5

Hansibal Droun is a sleek, portly, well-fed

and satisfied-looking man who always wears the latest fashions from Water-deep, is inordinately fond of his drooping mustache, and drives hard bargains. He's never without at least three hard-eyed, alert ex-Zhentilar warrior bodyguards, and so he can afford to strut.

If the locals don't like him, they keep it hidden, and he does deal in goods of the finest quality. He usually has about four riding mounts, another six ponies, and 10 or so mules available—though the mules are usually rented to local farmers, so a buyer will have to wait a day to get them. His shop stock is as good as a large sundries shop in Waterdeep, with particular attention to ropes, lanterns, tents, cages, spikes, and other adventuring gear.

### Andher's Mill Wool Mill

## 5 5

This mill turns out bales of local wool for sale to passing traders. It is of good, though not exceptional, quality, with a pleasing off-white color that takes well to dye or bleach. The mill sells only wool, and does not process it into cloth or thread, though preliminary cleaning and some carding is performed.

# INNS/Taverns The Black Flagon



This is your average backwoods rustic inn and tavern—overpriced and serving heavy., gravy-swamped food. Don't look forward to it too much, it is sure to disappoint you.



### Yarthrain

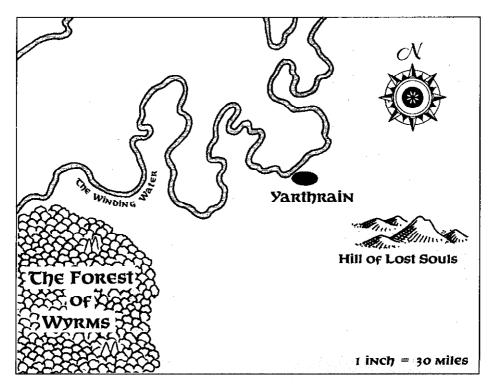
This half-ruined farming village on the banks of the Winding Water has been the traditional northern explorer's route into the Backlands. Here small skiffs from Boareskyr Bridge (although, since that place's poisoning, fearful crews have left from Serpent's Cowl instead) put in to unload seekers-after-glory-usually adventurers hoping to recover some of the lost magics of Netheril.

Here on the south bank of the Winding Water due northwest of the Hill of Lost Souls about 60 folk herd sheep and cattle, fish in the Water, and grow root crops to scratch out a living. Most travelers wonder why

they're there at all—and why the heart of the village consists of half a dozen grand stone houses, now roofless and fallen into ruin.

The answer is the Baron of the Backlands, that butt of a hundred country simpleton jokes, such as: "How did the Baron find out if the water was boiling? Stuck his hand in the pot until he could say, 'Yes, it's boiling now.' " Over 80 summers ago, the warrior Zelarravyan Fangshield, a successful mercenary from Amn, settled here and proclaimed himself Baron of the Backlands.

Zelarravyan was a battle-hungry soul. His enthusiasm for burning and hacking when carrying out a commission began to make him too







expensive for any of the merchants of Amn to use, but they feared what he might do if they exiled him or left him penniless, unhired, within their boundaries. So they all contributed gold pieces to give him a treasury, gave him the title "baron" and the money, and told him to go forth and settle the Backlands of the Sword Coast to guarantee Amn access to the timber and ores there forever.

Delighted, Zelarravyan took his armed followers, plus all the volunteers who hoped to become just as rich as he dreamed of being, and set forth. He came here to the closest river access to the Hill of Lost Souls (the landmark he headed for) and built himself a castle (referred to as Backlands Castle), surrounding it with grand homes for his captains, the new lord knights of his barony.

Then things started to go wrong. Orcs, hobgoblins, and worse swept down on the new settlement, a hard winter followed, and a wizard who'd been sent out from Amn to keep an eye on Zelarravyan decided that the baron had made too many mistakes and rash decisions. This man, Orlornin, came to court one evening and bluntly told Zelarravyan he was taking over.

The baron responded by hurling a chair at the mage, felling him, and then challenging the groaning man to a fight. Furious, the wizard hurled a swarm of fireballs, incinerating most of the courtiers around the baron, who was in turn hurled out through a high window into the branches of a tree, unconscious.



The surviving courtiers thought he'd been blown apart by the fireball. That set a battle going in earnest, with fighters converging on the wizard from all sides.

The wizard Orlornin gave them death. Warrior after warrior fell-but there were always more, shouting and charging at him. Fleeing, the wizard was cornered by the entrance of one of the lord knight's homes. He hurled lightnings into it, slaying the gathered household, and followed the bolts in, climbing to an upper floor from whence he could see and hurl spells at will. Summoning his wizard's staff to him, he made a last stand. When archers began firing at him from the other grand homes, he sent fire and lightning into them, one after another, until most of the barony lay dead around him, the houses burnt-out shells.

By this time, the baron recovered his senses. Finding a hunting bow and several quivers of shafts, he climbed a tree he thought close enough and slew the wizard, emptying both quivers into the slumped form until he'd torn it apart. (He'd heard of wizards walking after death.)

He then found himself alone except for the badly wounded. The survivors had fled down the river on boats. Grimly, Zelarravyan salvaged what he could from the ruins—including the wizard's staff—and set about building himself a secure, hidden place in which he could survive the winter.

The castle collapsed that first winter. In the spring, some Amnians

found the baron leading a small, desperate band of warriors. The band was raiding orcs for food as orcs usually raided the settlements of humankind. Most of the Amnians fled. A few stayed, and named the village Yarthrain, after a treacherous wizard in an old Amnian ballad who was given the death he richly deserved—but at a terrible cost.

Yarthrain the village has remained to this day, but the baron is long dead. A bitter, battle-wild man, he began to raid all the caravans and adventuring bands he came across, always brutally slaughtering any wizards among them. For some 10 years, the Robber Baron of Yarthrain was a feared man from end to end of the Coast lands. No attack was too bold for him, no revenge too difficult. He followed victims who'd given him the slip to as far away as the rooftops of Baldur's Gate, using the arsenal of magical weapons and devices he'd amassed to keep himself safe from most sorcerous attacks.

Finally he overreached himself. A young Waterdhavian noble eloped with his love, a noble of a rival house, because the head of neither house looked with favor on their union. They eloped in style, with a large baggage train and over 40 mounted servants. The baron fell on the party like a starving wolf as it approached Hill's Edge, headed for the distant glories of Cormyr. The cowardly young noble escaped the slaughter, abandoning his lady love and all their servants. The baron kept the survivors as hostages, returning in triumph to





Yarthrain, but the furious young noble, supported by merchants of that city who'd become increasingly fearful of their bandit neighbor, hired all the mercenaries he could find in Hill's Edge and came to Yarthrain at the head of an army of over 1,000 soldiers.

The baron's twenty-odd warriors saw the army approaching and fled. The furious baron took his lady hostage to the hill where the tumbled stones of his castle lay and buried all his stolen gold, vowing to return for it later. He planned to bargain his way to freedom with the lady, but she saw her love at the head of the approaching army and fought for her own freedom, stabbing and slashing the baron with his own silver-bladed long sword.

Furious, the baron knocked her cold and threw her atop the gold. Then in a fit of cold cruelty he buried her alive and fled. He used one of his stolen magical items to whirl the stones of the castle around the army in a deadly rain, and in the confusion he slipped away.

The young Waterdhavian survived the battle. He spent another decade hunting the baron down. His blade finally claimed Zelarravyan's life, but his lady love was still dead, and he returned to Waterdeep to rejoin his family a sadder man. The rift between the two noble houses remains to this day.

In Yarthrain, despite decades of hopeful digging and the use of most of the castle's stones to build cottages,



no trace of the baron's buried hoard of gold and any magic he couldn't use or carry has ever been found.

The baron still affects villagers every day, even if no adventurers are in town digging up Castle Hill. The grand stone houses of the lord knights stand empty because the ghosts of laughing lords and ladies still glide through them, glasses in hand, every night, and lamps and torches shine where there's only empty darkness. Curious folk who go to investigate are sometimes found dead in the morning—slain by some sort of monster mat eats their brains. An illithid, adventurers say-but by day, they can never find it. Some say a band of mind flayers must be digging into the hill in a treasure search of their own, somewhere under the villagers' feet-but no adventurers have ever met with them, no matter how deep they dig.

The tale of the gold is no fancy, though. Any adventurer who comes to Yarthrain is likely to see the phantom of the slain lady noble. She appears in darkness, a silver sword drawn in her hand, her long hair flowing about her shoulders, her gown torn away from one shoulder, and her eyes sad. She seems to reappear to those who've seen her before as a warning of approaching foes or danger. If they're asleep, they awaken abruptly, terrified by a nightmare in which the maiden's form, her eyes locked on theirs, melts away into

brown bones, sprawled atop gold coins under the earth somewhere. This haunting<sup>11</sup> is commemorated in the name of the local inn and tavern, the Silver Blade.

## Places of Interest in Yarthrain

Inns/Taverns

The Silver Blade

## !!!! 4440000

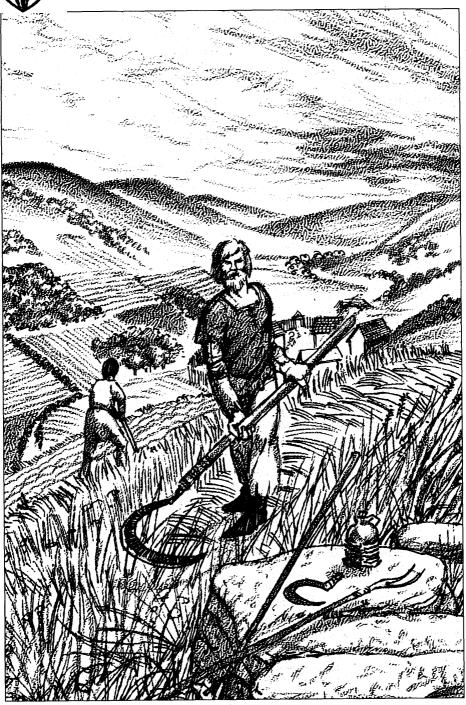
Built of stones from the Baron of the Backlands's castle, the Blade has three wings that sprawl through thick pine trees that separate it from the ruined, haunted houses of the lord knights. One is a stable, one a kitchen and pantry, and one is the sleeping wing.

The central part of the Blade at ground level is the dance floor and taproom. The Blade has gaming rooms and private meeting rooms upstairs in this central area. A huge, silver-painted, two-handed "boarkiller" sword hangs on chains from the overhanging cedar-shake roof over the front doors of the inn here as a signboard.

The sleeping wing of the Blade is surrounded by a small but pleasant garden where in summer a fishpond and scattered birdseed provide pleasant watching for guests. Furnishings are rustic, but both food and staff are good, and these distant bedchambers are cozy, clean, and quiet.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Elminster says that any adventurers who find the hoard will end the haunting as far as the villagers are concerned—but that the grateful maiden will reappear to them alone as a warning of danger for the rest of their lives. If they want to greet her, he advises, her name is Cyndril Hawkwinter. (Her suitor was Dervil Manthar.)







# Sunset Vale



xcept for "isolated" Baldur's Gate, when someone speaks of settlements in the Coast Lands to most folk in Amn,

Mirabar, Waterdeep, or even Cormyr, Sunset Vale is all they think of. To most people these communities seem islands of civilization and prosperity in a landscape of rolling wilderness inhabited only by legions of monsters and desperate brigands that, thankfully, only rough-and-ready caravan merchants need visit. Though travelers know this is false—or at least exaggerated—it does indicate the long-standing importance of the Vale.

The Vale is easily found on a good map. It encompasses all the lands between the arcing arms of the River Reaching and the upper Chionthar and the natural wall formed by the Sunset Mountains and the Far Hills. Berdusk (a base of the mysterious and powerful Harpers) and Iriaebor are the two largest cities of the Vale. The third, often overlooked city, is Hill's Edge, gateway to the Backlands. Between these centers of power lie verdant, prosperous farms that have always exported food in plenty to all the lands around. The Dusk Road runs through the heart of the Vale, carrying the traffic of this vital region back and forth. The food the Sunset Vale produces is also shipped out by the rivers and along the Uldoon Trail toward Amn.

The dangers Tunland presents with its nomadic humans and wemics and smaller marauding bands of goblinkin and other predatory monsters have kept the Vale safe from any sustained effort at conquest from coastal powers around the Sea of Fallen Stars. However, Amn and Westgate have both tried several times to take over the Vale by weight of coins, not swords.

Most recently, the Zhentarim are still trying their hand at either dominating the Vale or shattering it. From their continually strengthened fortress of Darkhold, they are mounting ever-bolder forays throughout the Vale. They are trying to scare farmers and small folk into leaving, and discourage poor folk from all over Faerûn from thinking the Vale is a good place to come and settle. They need to accomplish their ends before their aggressive swordswinging provokes the cities of the Vale—or, for that matter, anyone else-from assembling an army and going to war.

The Harpers are already openly at war with the Zhentarim in Sunset Vale. Many nights are lit by the sudden flare of hurled fireballs and split by screams of those struck down by the sword. Dawn the next day finds sprawled corpses or dark pools of blood where all had been peaceful the day before. Travelers, you've been warned.



### Asbraun

This small town is the market center of the farmers of the southern Vale. They trade with each other and with traveling merchants in the central market rather than taking their trade to the cities where someone else will make a profit from their food, not them. Buyers out of Berdusk and Iriaebor come to the market each day. It's understood that the market of Asbravn fills bellies all along the Chionthar.

Asbravn lies in a shallow valley where the Dusk Road and the Uldoon Trail meet. A dilapidated temple to Ilmater faces the market, which is ringed by swap shops, a cooper and cratemaker, a wagonworks, shrines to



Lliira (A House of Joy), Lathander (Morningstone House), and Waukeen (formerly Goldcoin House, and now an abandoned, burnt-out shell where local children play), a tavern called the Tankard and Sheaf, and an inn, the Board Laid Bare.

Asbravn is famous for the Riders in Red Cloaks, its police and defenders. They're local volunteers led by a few experienced warriors and occasionally bolstered by mages and priests who are sponsored by Iriaebor to keep the roads and the market safe. The Red Cloaks patrol in mounted dozens and often have to battle bandits, trolls, bugbears, orcs, and predatory monsters in the foothills of the southern Sunset Mountains, east of town.

Since Zhentarim activity has increased, the Cloaks have run up against poisonings several times, and against ambushes by mercenaries who were very well paid by someone. Local feeling-and fear-is running high against the Zhentarim. Almost every family has at least one Rider. The post of reinforcement Rider was once offered to any able warrior when needed, with archers being particularly sought after. At a pay rate of tens of gold pieces per week, such positions were eagerly sought. Now, however, the town's chief priest of Ilmater, Abject Supplicant Asgar Tellendar, is insisting on questioning applicants with the aid of the Harpers, or so local rumor runs.

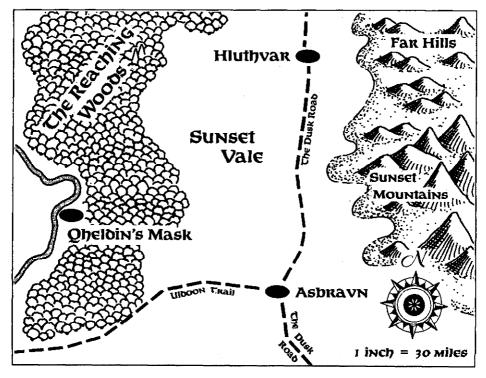
Asgar's temple, the House of the Suffering God, is in danger of closing down. Asgar heads a clerical staff of only six priests, three novices, and



four lay worshipers. The temple itself is a crumbling ruin, its tithes too meager to pay for repairs. Sinister visions have begun to appear in Asgar's dreams, showing the God on the Rack turning his back on the temple of Asbravn, but as these dreams were always followed closely by visits from mysterious smooth-tongued people trying to buy the House, he's not put too much credence in them. ("Zhents, or I'm a toad," Asgar has told his worshipers angrily.)

Other current local concerns are centered around a plan by one new landowner to breed long-horned horses for sale as battle mounts. Many farmers are afraid they'll get out and trample crops or need too much hay to keep the surplus crops shipping as good-as-gold exports.

The traveler through Asbravn will see only lush farms with wood lots, drainage ditches and ponds, wellkept barns and stump-and-boulder fences, and general tranquility. At corners where tracks and trails meet in the town stand old, cracked, stout stone pillars surmounted by crumbling horse heads. These are the only visible relics of an ancient city, Urdrath of the Horsemen, that stood on this site. The Horsemen were nomads who moved to Tunland or the Savage North long ago. Urdrath was where they came to worship and bury their dead in catacombs beneath the streets.





Today, false cellar walls and sliding stones in the foundations of many of the town's fifty-odd buildings lead into a vast maze of underground passages and galleries, their extent unknown. Tomb chambers and coffin niches in the passage walls are everywhere, and the deeper levels are roamed by undead. Some of the fallen warriors of the Horsemen, legend says, were buried with rich treasures.

Many a curious visitor has paid 10 gold pieces or more to a local to be let into the catacombs-and more than one has fled out again in terror after coming upon a recently slain thief, face black with strangulation, throat caught forever in the bony, chilling grip of a skeletal arm that reached out of one of the horizontal coffin niches as the culprit passed. Still, the occasional person comes to the surface with a gem-adorned dagger or the remnants of an ivory or amber necklace, and brave (foolish, locals say) young people still come from Berdusk and Iriaebor on dares to enter the catacombs to impress their friends.

Most visitors don't look for such excitement in Asbravn. They marvel at the well-kept farms while passing through, perhaps buying some fresh eggs, cheese, or a joint of meat at the market. Or, they come here to buy wagonloads of provender in the market, knowing they'll get good fresh fare at fair prices. This is the sort of town folk remember fondly after one visit, feel at home in after a second, and make sure they stop by when possible thereafter.

## Places of Interest in Asbraun

### Shops

Samborl's Sundries-in-Trade Swap Shop



Largest and most successful of the town's swap shops, the establishment of Samborl Deiryn is a crowded warehouse full of overstocked, used, nolonger-needed and useless items, from brass Calishite veil dancers' fingerbells to three-elk winter sledges. Some of Samborl's stock is broken, more is undoubtedly stolen, and he knows that some items are left with him as covert signals or message drops by various merchant cabals and other secret groups he pretends to know nothing about.

Both collectors and adventurers find his shop a fascinating place to browse-after all, where else in the entire Vale can you find a lifelike bull's head made of wood and painted felt, designed to be worn during fertility parades? Or a knockdown-archpole brass changing stall for ladies of delicate breeding, complete with cloth-ofgold dancing unicorn curtains (only slightly moth-eaten)? A triple-jointed blown glass back-scratcher from far Kara-Tur, perhaps? Or a whistle that summons dogs, leucrotta, and certain carrion birds-but is guaranteed to drive away carrion crawlers, thrikreen, ankhegs, and other giant insects with hard outer chitin? Perhaps a veil of feathers, once worn by a bird maiden of far Zakhara? Or six



smooth-polished wooden casks from Thay, designed to fit inside each other? Samborl sells them all, grinning and rubbing his hands or belly all the while. Most people think he's an oily slug, but Samborl just smiles—and makes sure he goes to bed each night a slightly *richer* oily slug.

#### Tantain's Barrels and Crates

Cooper/Packer



Tantain the Tall is perhaps the most important man in Asbravn. It's his flying fingers and tireless work that get goods ready to leave the market and travel long distances well protected. Some merchants even bring their wares up for packing from Berdusk and Iriaebor before shipping them elsewhere just to get Tantain to do the packing for them.

The tall, gaunt, sharp-jawed Tantain is never still except when he finds a packing table and lies down on it to snatch a few hours of sleep. He supervises a skilled crew of 10 strong young women and men, and casually throws all payments over his shoulder into a huge brass spittoon unearthed by some enterprising merchant from the old giant kingdom of Darchar (roughly, eastern Amn). Surprisingly, no matter where he is or what he's doing, the coins end up in the spittoon.

As one might expect, Tantain is deadly with throwing knives—the result, he says darkly, of a pirate and then a carnival career when he was too young to know better. Tantain lives

for his current work, though. He goes at it so hard that he'll probably die because of it after a shorter span of years than he might otherwise enjoy.

#### Rolling Wheel Wagons

Wagonmaker and Wheelwright/Carpenter

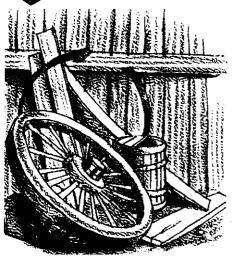


A wheel large enough for a titan's wagon adorns the front of the huge barn that houses this wagonworks. It's fully 20 feet tall and a favorite climbing tower for local youths, until they're chased off.

The six skilled carpenters and wheelwrights who own this shop together (employing a dozen apprentices and two families of woodcutters) pride themselves on fast repair work. They also sell new wagons made in this shop, but their output is slow because so many urgent repair jobs interrupt them. Their wagons are sleek, but sturdy, in their account. Some caravan merchants have been known to mutter that they're "more looks than hard wearing."

The Wagonmasters of the Rolling Wheel charge stiff fees for their work—175 gp for a major repair job isn't unknown—but one is paying for their unmatched speed and sure skill. They've been known to replace an entire wagon undercarriage, wheels and all, in the time it takes to snatch a quick trail meal. One of the shop's co-owners and wheelwrights, Thalibul Orn, is an archery tutor for the Red Cloaks. He has been known to shoot parchments out of the hands





of fleeing people hundreds of paces distant.<sup>1</sup>

# Taverns The Tankard and Sheaf

!!!! 000

This tavern is always busy and crowded with loud and thirsty visitors. Locals often take their tankards out the back door to sit on sawed-off logs and old stumps in the yard to get some peace. They won't appreciate outlanders barging into the yard to disturb their quiet smoking and gossip. Someone who's hired on as a Rider won't be considered an outlander.

Inside, the place is well lit and high-ceilinged, and is prone to echoing when patrons are sparse. Locals like to get to the Tankard with the mists of dawn, and they enjoy a tankard of hot broth before going to their fields. Their talk at such times is how word of

doings gets around Asbravn so quickly.

The walls of the old Tankard are adorned with scythes, sickles, rakes, and other farm implements. These are securely pegged in place with bent wooden hoops to prevent them being snatched down and used in the often heated arguments that erupt here between merchants of rival costers, cities, or realms.

### INNS The Board Laid Bare

!!! BBBB

Despite its dubious-sounding name, this large house serves excellent meals. The dining room—resplendent in cross-laid deep blue carpets brought all the way from Chessenta—is at the back of the ground floor in its own wing, separated from the three floors of guest rooms by a facing pair of meeting rooms. The kitchens and pantries are behind it, at the end of the wing. This keeps noise to a minimum, as light sleepers will deeply appreciate.

I was served simple fare for highsunfest: a platter of whole spit-cooked wildfowl, a club of horseradish root to gnaw on, and a tankard of dark, nutty beer. Everything was prepared just so, and at the end of even this light meal I was brought a small plate of sugared darkbread and a slice of lemon rolled in linen to clean my hands on. Eveningfeast was a delightful roast turkey in a gravy studded with shavings of roast boar, all of it garnished with parsley. A highly recommended house.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>From Elminster's notes, Thalibul can be considered a LN hm F8 with specialization in short bow (fired from horseback or afoot): THACO 13 with +1 attack bonus (+2 if within 30 feet), +2 on damage, ROF of 2 arrows per round, and the benefits of the point blank range category. Thalibul trains only Riders, not outsiders.



### Bendusk

Berdusk is sometimes called the Jewel of the Vale. This is not a term that pleases residents of the rival neighboring city of Iriaebor, though the two cities are firm allies in matters of trade and defense. The Uldoon Trail crosses the upper Chionthar at Berdusk. Three bridges actually span the river here, two making use of a fortified island to shorten their leaping spans. This spot's usefulness as a landmark and parley place plus the rising of a spring (the River Sulduskoon) to join the Chionthar here and the presence of rapids (the Breaking Steps) in the Chionthar just upstream of this spot have combined to ensure that there's been some sort of settlement at this site since the dawn days: first the elven moot of Clearspring; then a human fishing village, Sulduskoon; and finally the city known today The current city is named for Berdusk Orcslayer, a local human warrior whose energetic patrols drove orcs from the area, making it safe to farm and opening the Vale for human settlement.

Today, Berdusk is an important trading center, much involved in the shipment of goods. High-sided local waybarges are winched carefully through the rapids, which have been known to smash normal rafts and barges, sending crew and cargo to the freshwater kelpies below. Businesses in the city also make many wagons (considered fair to poor by most merchants) and excellent barges, and do extensive wagon repairs. Their wheels are very fine.

Woolen mills in the city serve farmers from all over the southern Vale, many of whom go to Asbravn for its large shearing market, selling the wool there to Berduskan millers. Dozens of caravans entirely of baled wool leave Berdusk for elsewhere in Faerûn at the height of shearing season.

Berdusk also produces a highly favored sweet wine, Berduskan dark, which is like very dark amber sherry, heavy and burning to the tongue. It fetches 6 gp per bottle or more and travels well. Folk are apt to find it in taverns and eateries all over Faerûn.

All of this prosperity is guarded by a city guard of 600 well-trained and equipped warriors of both sexes and all races, assisted by seven roving gauntlets (who raid Zhent and brigand holds, and escort caravans and travelers on the roads around the city) and by the famous Harpers. Not all Harpers look like merry minstrel rogues, but many do, and some can always be seen on the city streets.

The ruler of Berdusk, High Lady Cylyria Dragonbreast, is one of the leaders of Those Who Harp. Their most powerful base, Twilight Hall, stands in Berdusk, and many of the shieldmasters (officers) in the city guard are Harpers.<sup>2</sup>

High Lady Cylyria keeps Berdusk firmly in the Lords' Alliance, and the city welcomes all demihuman races. The Silent Lady loves music and poetry, and the city attracts the best traveling minstrels and musicians, increasingly joined by noted bookbinders, limners, and sculptors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>More about the Harpers and Twilight Hall can be found in the sourcebook FOR4 Code of the Harpers.





This thriving, growing community of artisans has begun to rival Waterdeep in hauteur if not in numbers or quality, and has begun to attract patrons, thieves, and wild romantic tales about its doings. Most tales center around one of two things: sculpted ladies so lifelike that they came to life or artists who've decided to expand their studios or rebuild the interiors of their abodes to please their aesthetic sensibilities. The statue stories are often based on real-life wizards' pranks. The remodeling tales usually go on to say how the artists uncovered pirate treasure brought up the river and hidden here long ago that has made them rich.

Certain sages who've not led me wrong before say there is a lot of pirate

treasure in the city, both hoarded and invested. Discreet inquiries in many inns, taverns, and shops can lead the needy to a dinner meeting with agents representing high-coin moneylenders (sponsors dealing in large amounts). Adventurers are warned that such folk like to see tangible assets before laying out coins. Such assets include keeps in strategic locations, city land holdingfor a caravan company, warehouses within the walls of a city will do-and large fleets of cogs, caravels, or other seaworthy cargo ships. The lenders are unlikely to sponsor forays underground or into ruins in search of legendary treasure. On the other hand, if adventurers make such trips on their own and return with heaps of gems they don't know what to do with, these



professionals can invest such wealth wisely. Some respected names among them: Thoront of the Gilded Hand, Than Tassalar, Orn "Manycoins" Beldarm, and Aulimann the Patient.

My explorations of fair Berdusk were hampered by my unfortunate reputation. Many Harpers seem convinced I'm some sort of Zhentarim agent, just as members of that organization believe I'm a Harper. Their surveillance and other tactics prevented me spending much time in the Jewel of the Vale. As a result, I can give the traveler only an overview of the city's features and establishments.

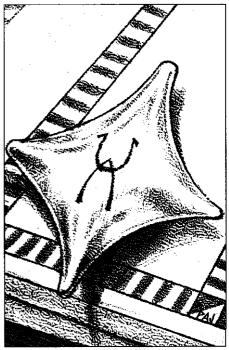
Some areas in Berdusk are rumored to be Harper warded. Look for tokens like the one shown at lower right.

### Landmarks

Berdusk, I should mention, is a city of tall, steep-roofed stone houses that crowd close together, overhanging the cobbled streets that run between. Sewer gratings are everywhere, feeding into a river-flushed system that is intended to keep ice and snow from burying Berdusk in the winter, but serves to keep the city clean and stench free in warmer months. The city guard has regular (and surprise) street patrols, and this, plus the presence of Harpers, keeps street crime to a minimum. Visitors who need a place to camp outside the city walls should report to the city guard—this ensures you of a pleasant welcome, patrol visits from the guard throughout the night, and the prevention of rude awakenings caused by the city guard wanting to know who you are or trying to settle

a newly arrived caravan on top of you in *their* night encampment. Moondown Isle is held by the guard as a practice area and patrol stableyard. Don't expect to camp there.

Berdusk stands within a rough oval of high-girt stone walls that are pierced by six gates. Three of the gates welcome roads carried by bridges across the Chionthar. The most downstream. or westerly of these three gates is Bellowbar's Gate, named for the city's first innkeeper, He perished with his inn in a fiery explosion caused by an angry wizard called Shalgar the Masked. The next two are Shortarrow Gate (so named because it's a short arrow's flight from it to the island to the south) and Riverroad Gate. East of



A Ward Token of Berdusk





these is Drovers' Gate. A road from it runs along the banks of the river, leading to many paddocks, stockyards, and caravan compounds.

The next gate, to the northeast, is Vale Gate, and the road running from it is also lined with inns, paddocks, and stockyards. This road is the Uldoon Trail, and runs to Asbravn in the heart of Sunset Vale.

The last city gate, on the northern face of the walls, is Woods Gate. It gives access to the east bank of the Chionthar downstream of the city, and is used mostly by hunters and woodcutters active in the Reaching Woods.

Within the walls, the city is nearly bisected by the Clearspring, also known as the River Sulduskoon—though it's a river you can see from one end of to the other. It rises on one face of a tree-girt, rocky height, Clearspring Tor, and runs southwest to meet the Chionthar.

West of the Tor is the Inner Chamber, the local temple of Deneir. This is actually a sanctum within Twilight Hall, but the Harper stronghold doesn't officially exist. Those Who Harp pretend that the entire complex of buildings is only the temple of the Lord of All Glyphs and Images, and they use the wards of the temple as additional defenses of their own. I've found a few ward tokens associated with the Hall, but warn travelers that these must be used in particular ways with passwords at particular places to avoid attracting the attention of helmed horrors, spectral Harpists, dread, and other guardians. I have heard tales of Zhentarim-hired thieves and brigands raiding Twilight Hall



when some ruse had drawn powerful resident Harpers away. They charged in force, only to be cut apart within a few strides.

Southwest and south of the temple of Deneir are shrines to Lathander and Azuth, respectively. The temple to Helm stands also to the southwest of the Inner Chamber, but it is sited farther south than Roseportal House, Lathander's shrine. A shrine to Leira lies south and slightly east of the Inner Chamber of Deneir. The shrine of Leira is a troubled place these days. Its worshipers are unsure of anything and prone to see danger over every shoulder. Travelers should beware.

Shrines to Lliira and Tempus are situated northwest of Clearspring Tor. A shrine to Waukeen right off the Tor to its northwest has become the House of the Hungry Merchant, where down-on-their-luck traders can get a warm bed and a meal thanks to donations by Berduskan merchants.

Clearspring Tor has been left as a park where folk often stroll, meet, eat meals bought from street vendors, or listen to minstrels. A favorite Berduskan snack, typically sold for 1 cp, is the goldenstar: a triangular eggbread loaf stuffed with sausage, chopped tubers, and chicken sauce.

Northwest of the temple to Deneir stands a larger rocky knoll, known as Castle Hill. Its tree-clad slopes are crowned by the High Lady's Castle, seat of city government and a working fortress, home to most of the city guard. Other guards dwell in the gates' guardtowers. The boundaries of Castle Hill are adorned by rows of small but



A Lady of Berdusk

very exclusive high-towered homes. These are the most desirable addresses in Berdusk, and are all claimed by citizens so rich that they can leave open commerce behind and pretend to be fun-loving nobility while they really keep cold, sharp eyes on the careful investments that support them.

Among the most prominent family names in the self-styled nobles—or "first folk," as they call themselves—are Athalankeir, Bellanbram, Caunter, Charthoon, Danallbur, Felannlilt, Gort, Halabart, Jalarghar, Lothkarr, Mreen, Oyindle, Parstin, and Uthgolabar. These folk throw parties, play elaborate games of capping each other's boasts, deeds, and displays of wealth,



and pursue faddish hobbies—sponsoring falconers one season, dragon tamers the next, all-female adventurer bands the third, and so on. No one else in Berdusk except these folk considers that the city *has* a nobility Most sneer at the first folk for being lazy play-pretties.

Facing the high houses of the first folk across the cobbled streets around Castle Hill are the houses of the wealthiest merchants, known as tall houses for their third- and fourthstory apartments. Among these tall houses stand the Running Stag (a good inn and tavern), the Flourished Flagon (a good tavern), the Heralds' Rest (a superior festhall), and the Ruby Shawl (a bad festhall). All of these can readily be found by their signboards, enchanted with continual faerie fire spells so as to glow every night. The Heralds' Rest is denoted by a ring of shields with a trumpet in the center, and all the other signs resemble the names they bear.

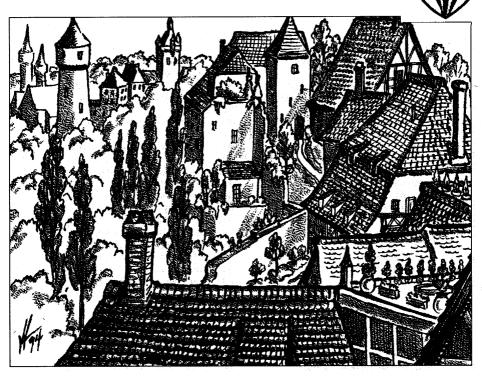
Also nestled amid the tall houses of the wealthier merchants are temples to Milil and Oghma (and the previously mentioned temple to Helm) and the Dawn of Any Day, a shop specializing in musical instruments and other items that bear minor enchantments. There's a persistent rumor that the various *feather tokens* and other minor magics this shop deals in have sly spells woven into them that allow the Harpers to know where they are at all times, and so readily track their bearers.

One important street in Berdusk is Steelsword Street. It enters the city by Bellowbar's Gate and runs north to sweep past Castle Hill, bounding it on the north, then passes north of Clearspring Tor and ends in Amberside, the large open market of Berdusk that stands just within the Vale Gate along the Uldoon Trail. On the other side of the market Steelsword Street continues as Steelspur Way south to the Claw, a five-way intersection just inside Drovers' Gate.

Another important street of the city is Shondaleir Street, which runs west from the Claw to the Crossways at the western city wall, where it turns north to curl to an end. Along its run, it crosses the Clearspring by the more northerly of the two bridges to span that short water: Leaping Lynx Bridge.

The Gollahaer is the shorter street that crosses the Clearspring by the more southerly bridge (the Handspan). It is important because of the many small, crammed sundry and hardware shops that line it, selling odd and rare wares that can't be found anywhere else between Waterdeep and the rich cities of Sembia. Here's where knights who simply must have left-handed gauntlets with silver dagger blades affixed to the fingers (25 gp each at Alamather's by the Water) jostle for room among clerks seeking chapbooks of gilt-edged parchment that are bound with gold wire in calfskin covers with brass corners, and sold in fitted calfskin travel covers to keep the damp away (50 to 75 gp each, depending on size and number of pages, at Ondraer's Fine Pages).

The Gollahaer's western end is at its meeting with the Minstrelride. The



"Tuneride" comes into the city at Shortarrow Gate and curves northward to run between the Inner Chamber and Castle Hill, and then crosses Steelsword Street before it ends. On it the visitor will find more temples, high houses, splendid shops, quality inns, and fine abodes of merchants than anywhere else in Berdusk.

The only other feature of the city immediately noticeable to a visitor is the walled Thousandheads Trading Coster base just inside Riverroad Gate, east off the Uldoon Trail. Well-guarded wagons of valuable goods are constantly entering and leaving this base, brought to or from caravans assembled east or south of the city. The goods are normally kept in the warehouses within this compound.

Day and night, Berdusk is a city of travelers. "Through trade" (as in, "We don't want to discourage the through trade") is a phrase often used as an overriding principle or concern when matters of gate guarding, taxation (currently 2 cp per wagon to leave the city, and nothing to enter), or city laws are being discussed.

Many folk too poor to have a wagon call Berdusk home. It is from here that many of the peddlers who rove the Vale and the Coast lands westward come, carrying their packs on their backs or by mule. (Every traveler can take one mule out of the gates for free. Additional mules are 1 cp each.) These peddlers may buy the wares they sell anywhere, and most have a specialty, be it pipes, lamps, scents, or something more



### Bendusk

- 1. The High Lady's Castle (Castle Hill)
- 2. Clearspring Tor
- 3. The River Sulduskoon (Clearspring)
- 4. The Inner Chamber (temple of Deneir; also Twilight Hall)
- 5. Costerheadshouse (Thousandheads Trading Coster base)
- 6. Amberside (market)
- 7. Moondown Isle (a.k.a. Harpstars Isle)
- 8. Bellowbar's Gate
- 9. Shortarrow Gate
- 10. Riverroad Gate
- 11. Drovers' Gate
- 12. Vale Gate
- 13. Woods Gate
- 14. Uldoon Trail
- 15. Steelsword Street
- 16. Steelspur Way (street)
- 17. The Claw
- 18. Shondaleir Street
- 19. The Crossways
- 20. The Gollahaer (street)
- 21. The Minstrelride (street)
- 22. Leaping Lynx Bridge
- 23. The Handspan (bridge)
- 24. Alamather's by the Water (shop)
- 25. Ondraer's Fine Pages (shop)
- 26. The House of the Hungry Merchant
- 27. The Ready House of the Right Strong Hand (temple consecrated to Helm)
- 28. Evensong Tower (temple of Milil)
- 29. The Seat of Lore (temple of Oghma)
- 30. House of the High Hand (shrine to Azuth)
- 31. Roseportal House (shrine to Lathander)32. The Misthall (shrine to Leira)
- 33. Starrevel Hall (shrine to Lliira)
- 34. Swordspoint Hall (shrine to Tempus)

- 35. The Running Stag (inn and tavern)
- 36. The Sign of the Silver Sword (inn)
- 37. The Flourished Flagon (tavern)
- 38. The Heralds' Rest (festhall) 39. The Ruby Shawl (festhall)
- 40. The Dawn of Any Day (music shop)
- 41. Tlindar's Own (tankard house)
- 42. The Bellblade Throne (tankard house)
- 43. Memblar's Minstrelry (tankard house)
- 44. Olyndin's Folly (tankard house)
- 45. The Hurled Harp (tankard house)
- 46. Blackpost's Bench (tankard house)
- 47. The Happy Hearth (tankard house)
- 48. The Bright Moon (tankard house) 49. Soondar's Sixth (tankard house)
- 50. Athalankeir House (first folk dwelling)
- 51. Bellanbram House (first folk dwelling)
- 52. Caunter Castle (first folk dwelling)
- 53. Charthoon Towers (first folk dwelling)
- 54. Danallbur Towers (first folk dwelling)
- 55. Felannlilt Towers (first folk dwelling)
- 56. Gort Castle (first folk dwelling)
- 57. Halabart House (first folk dwelling)
- 58. The Jalargharspires (first folk dwelling)
- 56. Lothkarr House (first folk dwelling)
- 60. Highall Mreen (first folk dwelling)
- 61. House Oyindle (first folk dwelling)
- 62. Parstin Towers (first folk dwelling)
- 63. Uthgolabar Hall (first folk dwelling)
- 64. Hullybuck's Gamble (inn, fence, and rental stables; halflings preferred)
- 65. Thunderwood Forays (adventurer sponsor and outfitter)
- 66. The Riverbarge (tankard house)
- 67. Three Brave Harpists (tankard house)
- 68. Lonelycoins House (tankard house)

exotic, that they buy wares for in one of the city's shops. The rest of their packs are filled with sundries from Amberside.

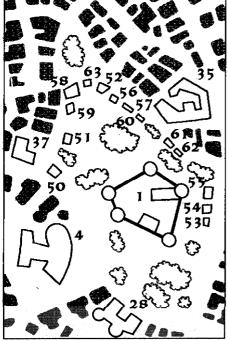
Amberside is a maze of tiny tent stalls where one can buy almost anything-including fine brass screws from Unther and Thay, exotic oils from Mulhorand, and other rarities in the Coast lands. Most peddlers come here because of the carry tubes made from cleaned-out horn, the ready supplies of cheap textiles from the southern and eastern reaches of the Sea of Fallen Stars that they can put into the tubes for sale elsewhere, and the plentiful amounts of small household ironmongery available here, such as hinges, hasps, pots with cover flaps, replacement handles, candle lamps, hooks, coffers, and the like.

Amberside is named for a longdead blacksmith, Ilm Amberal, whose









Bendusk's Castle Hill Area

shop once stood on the edge of the market. He was famous for working both fast and well, turning out scores of items and repairing almost all metal goods brought to him. His work made this market the preferred provisioning center for peddlers and others dealing in small, useful, non-perishable wares.

Small and useful are watchwords that still describe most of the wares sold in Amberside. For furniture and other large goods, seek in the city's shops. Berduskans love to shop—buying or selling. Unbroken goods one is tired of can often be readily sold for half price or less to a shopkeeper who can resell them. Most paid workers in Berdusk do quarter shifts. The open

time of a shop is divided into four, and a worker gets two of these periods off to shop and to eat. Shopping is in the blood of a Berduskan. Eating is often done while one is walking in the street from shop to shop or in, a favorite tankard house.

Tankard houses were once unique to Berdusk, but are beginning to appear in Waterdeep, Suzail, the cities of Sembia, and other cities where trade and bustle prevail. They're converted shops where one can get a light meal with a tankard of ale or mead and listen to a house singer or minstrel at any hour. There are dozens in Berdusk, and they are favorite meeting places for citizens, who usually avoid taverns unless they're planning to get properly drunk or revel and jest a night away. Locals who want to meet without being seen by those who know them tend to try to arrange a chance encounter at a particular spot in the maze of stalls in Amberside.

A typical meal at a tankard house is a mug of hot broth or stew; a tankard of minted water, ale, or mead; and a plate of goldenstars and seared meat scraps (bacon, chicken, or chopped sausage) in gravy. On rare occasions, small whole birds (quail, alafluster, wild duck, or grouse), spitted and cooked over the open hearth, are served instead. Three coppers is the price of a meal when there's music or song to be had. Two coppers is the fare when the house is silent. Good performers get extra coins thrown to the stage. Bad ones may get coppers thrown hard and directly at them.



All in all, I find this one of the most pleasant, cultured, clean, and welcoming cities in all the Coast lands—like a little slice of upper-crust Waterdeep without all the crowding, airs, and cut-and-thrust intrigue. As I've said, my explorations of the city were hampered by Harper suspicion, but I did manage to poke my nose into many of the prominent establishments of Berdusk and ask citizens for their opinions. Information that I gained follows directly.

# Places of Interest in Berdusk

## Temples The Inner Chamber

This center of worship is notorious for its concealment of Twilight Hall. The entire place is a Harper base, its approaches always guarded by watchful, concealed Harpers who command powerful magic. The clergy of the temple thankfully attend to their studies and services, leaving the security and upkeep of their holy house to Those Who Harp.

The temple is only one of a complex of interconnected, low stone buildings, all of which are plain but carved to form a series of beautiful sweeping curves. Most visitors need a guide to point out to them which structure is the temple. Many of the buildings of Twilight Hall have turrets adorned with royal blue, star-shot banners. The temple is *not* one of those.

Courtyards of trees, grass, moss, and rock garden plantings girdle the buildings, and the whole complex is enclosed by its own low (2 to 4 feet high), undulating stone wall. In times of attack, magical *walls of force* augment this ornamental barrier. At night, the gates of Twilight Hall can readily be seen. They're flanked by two pillars topped with stone eyes that hold magical everburning candles.

The Inner Chamber is a complex of library rooms and dorters (monastery dormitories) opening off a central sanctum wherein dances a floating, glowing light image: an ever-shifting display of various runes, symbols, and images. The High Scrivener of the temple can halt this display at a particular image, cause it to display a symbol on demand, and even defend herself or the temple by causing it to display magical glyphs or symbols whose discharges she can direct and control.

This prosperous temple is visited by many nonworshipers of Deneir. Some doubtless are spies sent to get as close as possible to the Harper doings in the surrounding Hall, but most are folk with money enough to consult the widely respected High Scrivener, Althune Dembrar, about the meaning, origin, and effects of images they've found or seen. Consultations with her require a donation to the temple coffers of 50 gold pieces per audience. If magic is involved, the fee doubles.

### The Ready House of the Right Strong Hand

This holy house of Helm is a large academy of arms, wherein many of the warriors who serve in Berdusk's gauntlets (patrol units) are trained, as well as



warrior-knights who serve Helm throughout Faerûn. The stern reputation of this god is borne out by the vigilant guard surrounding the temple at all times, and by the energetic clangor of arms heard from its inner courtyards constantly

Wounded caravan guards and warriors of all faiths can receive healing here at any time. Training, shelter, and tending to the hurts of those not faithful to Helm must be paid for by donating at least 25 gp to the temple for every night each guest stays. Clergy of Helm will firmly insist that injured folk rest at the temple until they are completely healed. Folk unable to offer up such moneys must remain at the Ready



The Falcon, Skyherald, and Evensong Tower

House until they have performed some service—usually participation as part of the escort-guardianship of a temple wagon or messenger along the roads to another city, but sometimes as witnesses sent to openly watch and report back to an agent of Helm on a meeting, event, or state of affairs elsewhere.

Predictably, this temple resembles a ready-armed keep. I've never seen so many grim, alert people in full armor gathered in one place at a time (I try to avoid battlefields), and a guest is always watched, *all* the time. On more than one occasion the Zhentarim have sent in a female agent who tried to work magic while in the privacy of a garderobe (jakes) stall, only to be pounced upon by a watching knight of Helm who leaped out from behind a nearby panel so swiftly that her spells were ruined!

The leader of the faith in the Ready House, Tathlosar Brimmerbold, is a famous war leader of Sunset Vale, known for his successes against trolls, orc hordes, and the forces of Darkhold. His formal title is Vigilant Godseye, but he's more widely known as "Sleepless Teeth," a name his followers gave him after he told them they must sweep down on foes by night, "like wolves with sleepless teeth."

#### **Evensong Tower**

This many-spired temple to Milil is the site of many a dignified revel attended by the haughtiest of the first folk, the wealthiest merchant families ambitious to rise in social circles, and visitors to the city who can seem rich or important enough to impress the clergy at the



temple gates. Revels are evening parties, gatherings to dance, drink, murmur insults or boasts to the nearest fellow revelers, and to listen. About two of them are held per tenday. Social climbers in Berdusk view these revels as battles of wit, demeanor, and sneering but to the visitor they provide some of the best entertainment anywhere.

A fast-paced, varied program of ballads, recitations of poetry, and orations goes on in various antechambers opening into the main chancel of the temple. This main chancel serves as a dance-and-chat floor during revels. Most of the poetry recitations are long, rolling, and incomprehensible to all save scholars-in short, bad. Many orations are performances of famous speeches of the past, the texts recreated with the aid of stone tell or legend lore magics. Most of them are stirring and entertaining in the extreme. Revelers wander freely from venue to venue, taking in what they want.

From the outside, the temple resembles the fancy-tale view of a castle. It's a cluster of very tall, very slender stone towers studded with brattices (wooden parapets), linked aloft by flying bridges—which must be perilous indeed in icy winter weather or even mere high winds—and topped by high-pointed conical roofs bristling with masts that sport many-hued banners and attract many-hued lightning strikes in stormy weather.

Admission to one of these revels requires a donation of 14 gp to the temple coffers, a noble manner, and expensive clothes—so the entertainment isn't free, but it is splendid.



The young Chantmistress of the Tower, Uluene Maertalar, whose face is as smoothly controlled as those of the best veteran card and dice gamers in Waterdeep, disapproves of serving food in the temple, but the clergy make and serve excellent mead and Halurskan wine (thick, black, nutty-tasting mushroom wine devised long ago in Berdusk by the baker Halurska the Fat). Drinks are an extra 1 gp per glass, payable on the spot—so beware pickpockets on the dance floor.

#### The Seat of Lore

The temple of Oghma in Berdusk is a dusty, dignified old stone house crammed with books, scrolls, maps, and reading tables and lit by a swarm of obedient magical glowing *globes*. It



is a center of study that specializes in the tales of yesteryear and in news and tales of the here-and-now rather than the more usual focus on genealogy, treaties, laws, and records.

The current news and tales are gathered by the energetic High Loremaster of the temple, the gnome Bransuldyn Mirrortor, a former adventurer who delights in donning one of his many disguises and shambling forth into Berdusk or into the Vale beyond to wander and listen. He's devised several spells that allow him to record what he hears, edit it in his mind, and then transcribe—from afar—what he wishes into books laid out ready in the temple. Often, awestruck young novices can be seen gathered around a tome that is busily writing itself by those few able to gain access to the inner chambers of the temple.

The Seat does not pay for verbal information or lore, although faithful who bring such information as part of an offering will be warmly received. It does pay for books-moreover, the clergy here value diaries, fancy-tale chapbooks, and other fancies of rumor and lore that other scholars belittle or sneer at. Such tomes typically fetch the seller at least 100 gold pieces from the temple. In a typical tenday, the Seat may acquire three or four such volumes. Magical tomes or any writings from long-lost Netheril command prices in the range of tens of thousands of gold pieces.

Lesser clergy of the Seat copy out passages from temple writings (75 gp per page or part thereof), something the faithful and guests alike are forbidden to do. Copying magic requires many more coins and senior priestly permission.

# Homes The House of the Hungry Merchant



This former shrine to Waukeen offers poor visitors and beggars of the city a warm bed and a meal. The meal is usually thick beef-and-carrot stew, enlivened by anonymous lumps of chopped meat and vegetables.

The House is a big, drafty barn of a place run by merchant donations. Traders of either sex and most races are allowed to stay here. The House is staffed by the city guard, who keep a close and constant watch on guests to prevent brawls, thefts, muggings, and the like. All weapons must be surrendered to the staff during a visitor's stay.

By city law, six nights at a stretch is the longest a person can stay in the House. Guests who are found to have more than 4 gold pieces' worth of coins on their persons are ejected from the House because it is considered that they can afford their own meals and accommodations.

#### Shops

Alamather's by the Water Unusual and Unique Weapons



This crammed shop on the Gollahaer is a favorite stop for caravan merchants trying to fill special orders. It specializes in one-of-a-kind, rare, or



unusual weaponry, often gadgets that conceal weapons or devices that seem more suited to the worship of Loviatar or decadent arena battle than real war. Telescoping sword canes are steady sellers at 125 gp each, with a choice of reach, appearance, and blade-plating. Also popular are the aforementioned gauntlets whose fingers are fitted with silver dagger blades. They cost 25 gp each. Barbed-wire whips are another favorite item at 35 gp each. Such whips are not allowed by drovers in Berdusk. No one talks about the fact that they're a symbol and tool of the underground slave trade.

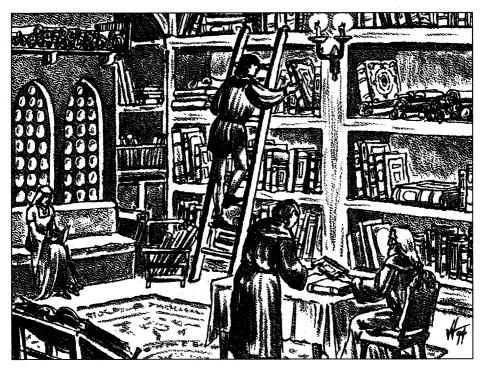
Professional killers can select from among a varied line of trapped goblets. Unless the goblets' handles are

gripped in a certain manner, springpropelled blades thrust out from the goblets' bases to slash the throats of drinkers when the goblets are raised and tipped. Other trapped items for sale run from coffers to snuff boxes. Most drive poison needles into those handling them in any but a particular safe way. Buyers must supply their own poison. By law, no shop or concern in Berdusk can sell venoms or refined or magically created toxins.

#### **Ondraer's Fine Pages** Bookseller

8 8 8

This shop on the Gollahaer sells books—a small selection of useful books (such as, ahem, my own guide-





books to the Realms), and a large selection of new, blank books, scrolls, frames of vellum, and reams of parchment. These new materials come in a variety of sizes, bindings, and formats, from simple unadorned paper-covered chapbooks to dragonskin-bound tomes half as tall as an adult human male with locks, travel cases, giltedged pages, and sewn-in silk bookmarks. All of them are expensive. The cheapest bound volume in the shop is 12 gp, and the most expensive is priced at a thousand times that.

Mages, priests, limners, scribes, cartographers, and apprentices to all of these professions come or are sent here to purchase just the right volume for their needs. Powerful fire-proofing enchantments leak out of this shop. Don't be surprised if your lantern, torch, or pipe goes out as you approach.

The proprietor, fat old Ondraeas Ondraer, spends most of his days dozing in a tankard house, leaving his shop in the hands of three sons and two apprentices—all thankfully as able as Ondraeas himself. They can advise you on the right paper to be used with specific bindings, or in a particular clime, or for a particular purpose.

The Dawn of Any Day
Minor Magical Items

8 8 8 8 8

This small, shuttered shop seems to front on several streets, including

Lute Street, the Minstrelride, Danathar's Street, and Amble Laneall in an area south of Castle Hill and west of Twilight Hall. The distinctive sigil of the shop—the rays of the sun rising over a harp, which stands atop a lute—appears on otherwise plain wooden doors when they offer access to the shop. At other times, these same doors seem to lead into houses that have been divided into private apartments. I've been told this is part of the ward that protects the shop—a ward linked to a guardian ghost (probably a spectral Harpist, but possibly a watchghost), a series of Evard's black tentacles spells triggered by thieving activities, and more mysterious guardian beasts. Dweomers of all sorts glow with a faint light when in this shop—even to the skins of those who've received a healing spell recently!

This shop is run by a mysterious veiled lady known only as Darth-1eene.<sup>3</sup> She sells items that bear minor enchantments—in particular, musical instruments. A persistent rumor in Berdusk insists that these minor magics—such as daggers that glow with faerie fire upon command, stones that change hue when immersed in poison or tainted liquids or that alter their color when their surroundings reach a certain temperature, scabbards and sheaths that banish rust, feather tokens, and healing potions—have spells laid on them that let certain Harpers know where they are at all times.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster was unwilling to give details of this shop's wards, wares, or proprietress. He did confirm that the rumor about magical Harper tracing of many items is true—and he also let slip that Darthleene is an archlich!



The shop is small and dim, and many of the wares are used and partially broken. They are usually displayed in small glowing spheres of air that float in a slow, aimless dance in the center of the room while the proprietress stands watching them from the background. If she's asked for an item, she will step forward and take it out of the sphere, ignoring the other spheres, which shift out of her way. I've seen bold buyers try to grasp items and have the globes simply float through them, item and all, as if the people were themselves phantoms. Only Darthleene seems able to free items from this magic. She will give some information about the past of some items if pressed-many seem to have seen service with adventuring bands who are no more-but doesn't volunteer details, in hopes of making a sale.

Adventurers can usually count on getting some healing potions and glow-on-command items whenever they visit (400 to 500 gp each), but all other items are only available from time to time. The shop's stock seems small. More than one buyer has remarked that these rarer items are not only much dearer—4,000 to about 12,000 gp—they all seem linked to various curses, conditions, or spells that plunge their buyers into unintended adventures.

The shop never seems to close. Whenever a door into it can be found, Darthleene's waiting within. One man I met in Berdusk even said that the shop must be a ploy of the goddess Tymora (present as the veiled Darthleenel in order to plunge prudent

adventurers into daring and danger—but he was very drunk at the time. The veiled proprietress herself told me the shop's name is another way of saying that adventure can begin any time in your life if you only look for it. Perhaps she serves some as-yet-unrevealed god or goddess of adventure.

#### Thunderwood Forays

Adventuring Gear

5 5 5 5

This unassuming shop looks like a very narrow, tall, old stone house with dark green trim and crumbling stonework. Inside, it's all one huge, high room, with catwalks, balconies, and stairs leading to side galleries where the upper floors used to be. In this cavernous space hang rows of complete suits of armor, ropes dangling like a giant beaded curtain, chains, sledges, wagons and spare wheels, weapons of all sorts, and so on-a huge assortment of adventuring gear, from winches to metal belt flasks. It's all warded, of course, to prevent theft of the weapons, and not only does breaking the ward alert nearby Harpers and city guard posts, it also frees the helmed horror guardians to act. The helmed horrors are also assisted by something worse, a monster that Olbrimsur Thunderwood, the proprietor, refused to make known to me.

Olbrimsur is a ranger who spends his spare time scouting the Vale area, particularly the Far Hills. When he identifies the lairs of giants, goblinkin, and other perils, he plans an expedi-





tion to deal with them—and puts out word around the tankard houses, inns, and taverns so visiting adventurers in town will hear.

Olbrimsur sponsors adventuring bands by giving them discounted prices on gear. He sometimes throws in a potion of healing for the group or on especially dangerous forays, one for each member of the group. He furnishes directions, tips on what to do or watch for in various locales, and can put his finger on several known caverns, ways down into the Underdark, hidden valleys often used by brigands or monsters for shelter, and so on. A firm friend of the Harpers, Olbrimsur is viewed as an ally and inspiration by many adventuring bands in the Coast lands.

# Taverns The Flourished Flagon

This tayern is a favorite of adventurers-in particular dwarves, gnomes, and halflings. On most nights, their rowdy carousing can be heard up and down the street as they dance, sing hurl flagons at each other (hence the tavern's name), and generally have a good time. The walls are adorned with paintings-often inept and amateurishdone by patrons, proudly depicting heroic highlights of their adventuring careers. It looks like a child's drawn-on nursery wall full of slaughtered orcs, drow, dragons, liches, beholders, and mind flayers, with a lot of short, plump, bearded folk posing dramatically, chests



swollen, in between or on top of all the dying monsters.

This tavern is a good place to join up with adventuring bands, though humans and elves aren't made all that welcome. The 10 or so gnomes who own the place—all of whom answer to the name of Marklo—are rumored to hide or invest coins brought in by adventurers, and perhaps even fence stolen goods—but I was unable to learn if this was true. If you're a dwarf, gnome, or halfling, try asking.

#### The Running Stag

# !!! BBB OOOO

This establishment is mainly a drinking spot, but has a few rooms to let upstairs. Guests in these rooms can eat in the kitchens, but there's no dining room, and little escape from the good-natured noise and bustle of the taproom.

The decor in the Stag's taproom mimics a forest, with pillars done up to look like trees, vines, and living tree limbs sprouting leaves overhead. Illumination is provided by several *drift-globes* kept above the leaves by netting. A timed spell shifts their light from sunlight to moonlight in accordance with the passage of time outside.

There's an endlessly tinkling spring in the center of the taproom that cascades out of a rock pile to flow into a little pond studded with lily pads. The spring is real, not magically animated, and yields the soft water used in the brewing of the Old Dark (ale) and Elder Root (stout) served here. These beers are brewed in the cellar, which makes the place reek of hops and

barley from time to time.

The Stag also serves a full list of wines, zzar, sherries, mead, and liqueurs from the far corners of the Realms. The only food to be had, though, is cheese and hot buttered biscuits.

Foresters, rangers, woodcutters, wood elves, and other forest folk feel at home here. Even korred and satyrs have been seen in the Stag from time to time, slipping in for a tankard on wet or icy nights. I'm told this is the place in town to hire guides, and it is famous as the site of a duel some 10 vears ago between two druids. A druid of Silvanus disputed a matter of forest management with a nonlocal druid—a hierophant, it turned out, dedicated to Eldath. Before they were done, the tavern had experienced a full-blown storm, an earthquake, wild plant growth and trees wrestling with each other, a snarling, snapping, goring and charging stampede of woodland beings locked in combat with each other, and fungi growing on and out of everything with bewildering speed. At the end the devotee of Silvanus was in serpent form, helplessly entangled in a ball of roots, and gasping in the full torrent of the spring. All traces of the mess were cleaned up long ago, and there's now a sign on the door: "No druidic duels today/The Management." (Underneath, someone has scrawled: "Not even a little one?")

I felt relaxed and at home here, even given the exotic decor. This is a good place to drink, and not a bad one to stay in—if you're a sound sleeper.



# Tankard Houses

The attractiveness of these drinking parlors varies with whoever's performing while you're in them, of course, but from what locals tell me, the better tankard houses include the following establishments: Blackpost's Bench on Steelsword Street, Lonelycoins House on the Minstrelride, the Riverbarge on Steelspur Way, Three Brave Harpists on the Gollahaer, and the Bellblade Throne on the Uldoon Trail. (For lack of room, I was unable to show the locations of all the city's tankard houses on the map I rendered of the city.)

There's also the Curious Kelpie, a tankard house that only opens when

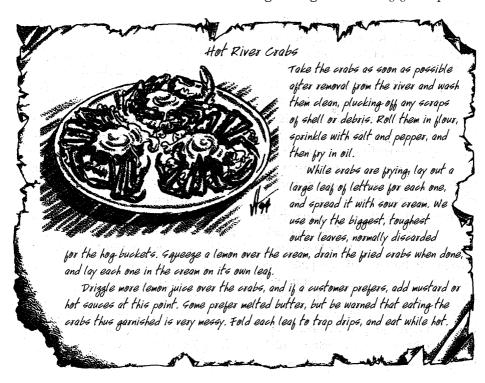
its owners, the Dragon Daggers halfelven adventuring band, are in town. Caravan merchants flock there then to see what treasure the Daggers have brought back from ongoing explorations of ruins somewhere in the Coast lands. Spies say the Daggers pass through a *gate* somewhere west of Berdusk—and then close the way behind them, so that none can follow where they go.

#### lnns

The Sign of the Silver Sword



Whiz large, well-built inn features lush, deep, sound-deadening carpeting throughout. *Glowing globes* pro-





vide soft, continuous lighting in the large guest rooms, each of which has a bath, a water-flush garderobe, a canopied bed, a writing table, and a big, soft easy chair. Even more wondrous than that—the rooms are quiet!

The only drawback? Service is almost nonexistent, and there are no bell pulls, so you trudge down to the front desk, ask for something, are given a polite reply, and then nothing happens until the following evening, it seems. Ah, well—this is a great place for the self-sufficient traveler or one just wanting to rest undisturbed.

All guest rooms have privacy bars that can be emplaced from within to block door and windows. However, I suspect that secret passages allow staff to enter barred rooms through sliding panels in the backs of the walk-in cloak closets.

The food is good. The accent is on roast boar and venison cleanly cooked in wine, and I managed to prevail upon the chef, a one-eyed dwarf lass by the name of Shundasza Broadaxe, to pass on details of the one dish that I found a real standout: hot river crabs. To make this recipe, one needs fresh soft-shelled crabs—crabs who've shed their shells for larger ones, but not yet grown hard chitin again. They're best eaten within half a day of taking from the water or half the taste is gone.

These crabs cost 1 cp each and are worth thrice that and more. They are a mouth-watering delight, I assure you. They go well with white wine or Saerloonian glowfire. Try a platter with hot soup.

#### Hullybuck's Gamble



This sprawling, labyrinthine place is an untidy linkage of former warehouses and tall houses, and now functions as a combination inn, safe storage house, and rental stables. The part serving as a safe storage house actually is a fencing area for stolen goods, as everyone in Berdusk seems to know, though the Harpers and city guard turn a blind eye to most things short of magical items and slaves. Horses and mules can be traded, rented for use in the Vale only, or bought outright. I'll say only this about them: Beware spavined old nags enspelled to seem pain-free and frisky for a day or so.

The proprietor, Raphtosz "Hurl" Hullybuck, prefers halflings as guests, although all folk short of orcs will be accommodated. (Nonhalflings just get the worst rooms, that's all.) Hullybuck's nickname, it must be said, comes from his ability to pick up belligerent guests and toss them out into the street— through whatever closed doors or other folk happen to be in the way. I strongly suspect a girdle of giant strength or similar magical aid.

#### Festhalls The Heralds' Rest

This exclusive, luxurious private home looks like a small castle. Inside it's a haven of tapestries, carpeting' discreet veils, and polite, skilled lady and gentleman escorts. Reputed to be run by a





former princess from a city-state of the eastern Sea of Fallen Stars who grew weary of the dictates of protocol and class, the Rest takes its name from a long-ago visit by three High Heralds, predecessors of the present-day holders of the offices, who were so delighted that one took his escort as wife, and all three offered to buy the place.

The offer was refused, but the Heralds were allowed to sponsor the Rest through some lean times, and they now share in its profits. There are rumors of documents, treasure, and even Harpers on the run being hidden in the dimly lit chambers and passages of the Rest—and some folk say magical *gates* link it with Silverymoon, Ardeepforest near Waterdeep, and with nearby Twilight Hall. High fees

are rumored to be paid for discreet use of these portals to courier valuable folk or items about in a hurry.

#### The Ruby Shawl



Every city has "another" festhall—a coarse, sleazy hole. This is Berdusk's. The Shawl is for the drunk and the desperate only. Recurrent rumors of an invisible magical brooch lost by a tipsy patron occasionally lead adventurers to try to search the escorts' quarters. Though the Shawl denies that any such brooch ever existed, certain escorts have been known to pay down-on-their-luck mages and clerics to come up to their rooms to cast magical detection spells.



# Corm Orp

This small road-hamlet lies west of the Sunset Mountains on the Dusk Road southeast of Hill's Edge. Here, in the lengthening shadow of Darkhold, halflings and a few humans produce the bulk of the food consumed in the nearby city of Hill's Edge. The traveler won't find much more to Corm Orp than its horse pond, caravan camping ground with paddocks, wood lot, public pump, a few houses, and the Hungry Halfling inn and tavern. The pump is covered by a pavilion to shelter it in wet or winter weather.

Under the hills east of Corm Orp, however, are hundreds of halfling burrows. In fact, here lies the fastest-growing halfling community north of the land of Luiren. Every Shieldmeet, more halflings gather in Corm Orp, like what they see, and decide to move there.

Corm Orp is ruled by a human lord, a good and just man by the name of Dundast Hultel, who trains and leads the village militia of 30 human riders. In recent days, faced with increasing Zhentarim-sponsored beast and brigand raids, Dundast has turned to both Hill's Edge and the Harpers of Berdusk for aid. Several fierce battles have been fought in the hills east of the hamlet—and in most of these the halflings, boiling up out of their underhill homes with fierce determination and ready daggers, have decided the day.

The halflings of Corm Orp are rightfully proud of the food they produce, especially their mushrooms



and free-range hogs. Another product of pride is mass-produced red clay pottery—simple, sturdy items widely used throughout Faerûn. Dealers can be contacted at the Hungry Halfling.

## Places of Interest in Corm Orp Temples

#### The Ladyhouse

Nestled in a hollow among the green, pig-roamed hills east of Corm Orp is this large, prosperous center of worship to Sheela Peryroyl, the halfling goddess of nature, growing things, and agriculture. The Ladyhouse is filled with flowers and climbing vines inside and surrounded by gardens

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The location of Corm Orp is shown on the map found in the entry on Hill's Edge, later in this chapter.



outside, including "wild" gardens, which are preserved plots of tangled weeds, shrubs, and scrub trees. Travelers should take note that these and the roadside wood lot in Corm Orp itself are sacred to the goddess and should not be burned, cut into for firewood, or otherwise despoiled.

Halfling worshipers bring their best flowers and plants to the temple for use in breeding and in rituals, and the clergy spend their days working with the halfling farmers, keeping watch over the hills for Zhentarim raids, thieves, and wandering beasts who might harm the crops, and chanting the praises of Sheila the Watchful Mother. (The hogs are a constant lure to wolves. One expert archer among the priests has even developed a recipe for wolf stew!)

The clergy are led by the widely respected matriarch Alliya Macanester, the Old Lady of Corm Orp. Her wisdom and foresight have prevented weather spoiling the crops on two important occasions: the Great Frost of early 1346 DR and the drought of 1322 DR, which brought down desperate attacks on Corm Orp, as on so many other places in Faerûn, from starving monsters.

# INNS/Taverns The Hungry Halfling SSS USUSUS TO FOR

This wayside house was originally a local human lord's manor and still sports an elegant stone entry arch and gatehouse. Within is a courtyard, muddy in all weather because of the spring that wells up in it to run through the wood lot and then sink down into the underways again. Also inside is a low, timber-built taproom, and behind it—down a long corridor that adds privacy—the old stone manor, which now forms a very comfortable inn.

The Halfling is a favorite of traders who travel the Dusk Road. They like its quiet, slightly shabby rooms because they're peaceful and feel like home. The staff see that the rooms are always fully furnished with writing paper, spare boot thongs in the walk-in cloak closets, old slippers in a variety of sizes for wear around the inn, a few bottles of fruit liqueur and mintwater for late-night thirst quenching; sharpening stones for weapons, spare candles and wicks and all the other useful clutter found in one's own home. Much of this stuff does get "borrowed" by the needybut then, that's what it's there for.

As much as possible, regular guests are given rooms they prefer to better make them feel at home. The inn has rugged food boxes insulated with wool sacks in which hot food is brought from the kitchens to the room of any guest who likes to eat alone—or at least avoid the cozy dining room.

Most *don't* avoid the dining room, though. The food served there is as good and hearty as popular lore credits halflings for. (The chicken dumplings are *superb.*) This inn is definitely recommended.



#### Darkhold

Today, this black stone fortress is feared and hated by folk all over the Coast lands—and much farther afield in Faerûn—who've never seen it and hope never to.<sup>5</sup> I am one of them. For obvious reasons, I dared not approach this grim stronghold—even in disguise—and can only tell you what I know of this place of death from questioning others, some of them long-lived and mighty in lore.<sup>6</sup>

From this fortalice (small fort) in Darkhold Vale (a cleft high up on a rock shoulder of the huge mountain known as the Gray Watcher of the Morning), the Zhentarim now raid down into Sunset Vale more or less at will, using hippogriffs, hendar, foulwings, and even more fearsome aerial steeds<sup>7</sup> as spies to seek out caravans, holds whose militias are elsewhere or weakened, and other easy prey. Travelers are advised to avoid Darkhold's reach as much as possibleand to be aware at all times that Darkhold's reach includes almost all of Sunset Vale by night or whenever the defenders of Vale settlements are busy elsewhere.

Once a castle of the Giant-Emperors, Darkhold was built for folk of giant stature. (Some sages say the Giant-Emperors were but slaves of the decadent archwizards of Netheril who had the castle built by an elemental. The giants styled themselves Emperors only after Netheril fell and they were left to their own devices.) To human senses, its

halls, stairs, and chambers are vast—and icy cold in winter.

Most tales of lore agree that whatever the castle's origin, it came to be inhabited by giants, proud and willful robberfolk who raided the lands around the castle (verdant Tunland, then grasslands inhabited by countless herds of wild beasts—not the swamp so much of it is today-and the halfling-held lands of Sunset Vale) at will. The giants repelled halfling attacks and bold dwarven and human probings with ease, but in the end slew each other. Two rival princes slaughtered their sire and all the other giants by poison, spells, traps, and hireswords in their mad struggle to eliminate each other. Some tales say they ended up fighting each other in the otherwise-deserted castle, stabbed each other' and crawled off to separate hidden chambers to die. Their ghosts haunt the castle, striving for supremacy one over the other still, whispering so as to set one Zhent against another in an unending spectral struggle to rule the castle.

With all the giants dead, the Keep of the Far Hills stood empty. It was soon plundered by bold human and elven adventurers, and one of them, Othlong Blackhelm—he whom the ballads call the Robber Lord—made it his home. He soon fell to treachery and his successor, Angarn Surfyst, used the castle as a base for brigandage in his turn. He, too, was slain by one of his followers, who set himself up as the Wolf Knight.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>The location of Darkhold is shown on the map in the entry on Hill's Edge, later in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster snorted when he read this, and said: "And what ye couldn't worm out of Alliya and Cylyria and me, ye just went ahead and made up."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>The latest rumors speak of dragon-breeding experiments and hitherto-unknown draconic horrors that have resulted from them. When abroad in the Vale, watch the sky, and be wary.





The Lich-Queen Varalla

History doesn't even recall his name—his throat was cut by a lady captive in his bedchamber one night. She turned out to be a sorceress, and a colder, more cruel brigand than the rest, ruling Farkeep as Sarunn Thoon (the ballad "The Witch of the Far Cold Hill" tells her tale). She fell in her turn to a cabal of masked wizards who turned out to be mind flayers, and held the banditwarriors of the castle in mind-thrall until they died in service and only zombies were left.

Then a dragon struck—a white wyrm, most say though accounts vary. It laired in the keep until slain by a dwarf hero, Harristor Thunderswing, who later went under land to form his own clan in the Lightless Lands and was never seen again. The empty castle was roamed by monsters—histories record both a beholder and a leucrotta using it as a lair at various times—and then was taken by brigands. They were slain by an adventuring company, the Wildmen of the North, led by Brundar Tigerbane. He renamed the castle the Wild Hold and refortified it, but he fell in battle, along with most of his followers. The castle changed hands again.

A succession of petty rulers—some of whom styled themselves Lord Knight of the Far Hills, and at least one of whom called himself the Duke of Sunset Vale—held the castle for 200 years, holding sway over varying parts of Sunset Vale. Sunset Keep became a hold well known (if not respected) among merchants traveling between the Sword Coast and the Sea of Fallen Stars. The rulers of the Keep raided passing trade, fought with those who sought to drive them out, and either prevailed or were cut down and supplanted in their turn by a new petty lordling who grew into another proud robber barononly to fall in his turn. At length one was left so weak by an attack that he and his few retainers perished under the claws and fangs of wolves and other monsters made bold by hard winter weather, and Sunset Keep became a monster hold again.

It gained the name of Darkhold when a lich-queen rose to rule it, extending her skeletal hand out over the Vale to raid and to rule much as her human predecessors had done. She used skeletal warriors, zombies, more sinister undead, and the monsters of the Keep who had submitted to her to enforce



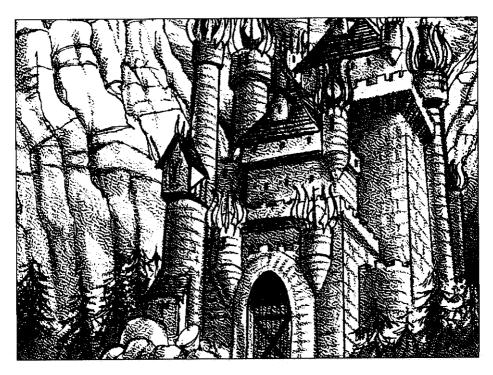
her rule. Those monsters of the Keep who did not submit, she destroyed.

Some say this lich-sorceress, Varalla, fought at the Battle of Bones. Others say she was an archsorceress of lost Netheril, freed from ages-long slumber by a monster smashing an inner wall of the Keep. Whatever the truth, Darkhold became a name of horror as word spread of the dark spells worked by Varalla to aid her undead minions as they raided far afield over the Coast lands and as far east as the outposts of Cormyr.

Tales of Varalla's new spells lured the Zhentarim into attacking her. Using goblins who were promised easy treasure and mercenaries who weren't told what they'd have to fight, the Zhentarim used their magic and Zhentilar troops to smash Darkhold's defenders and inter-

rupted the lich-queen at her studies deep in the castle. While she traded spells with Manshoon of the Zhentarim and his magelings (many of whom perished in the fray), the dark priest Fzoul Chembryl used magic to reach her and felled her with a special mace that worked similarly to a *mace of disruption*.

From that moment in 1312 DR on, Darkhold has been a Zhentarim base. It has grown into a fortress rivaling the Citadel of the Raven in importance if not in size. Now home to a thousand Zhentilar under the wizard Sememmon, magelings, and priests of Cyric, Darkhold is a waystop for Zhent caravans. Its patrols roam from Asbravn to Skull Gorge. Beware them! Don't be lured by tales of mighty spells and secret ways by which to reach them!





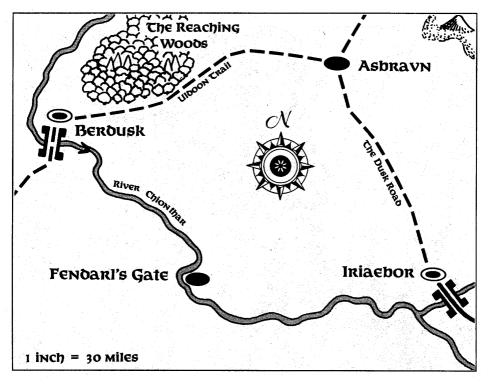
# Fendarl's Gate

This riverbank shepherds' village stands on the north shore of the upper Chionthar between Berdusk and Iriaebor in a bight where the river bends sharply. It's named for its long-ago founder, a warrior grown weary of wetting swords, who settled down here to farm and spent the rest of his days fighting off trolls. His great-great-great-grandson now rules the Gate from a tiny castle perched on a rocky knob at the river's edge, which is known as the Imperial Palace.

This is fitting, because the ruler of Fendarl's Gate styles himself the High Knight-Emperor of the Vale.

The real name of this fat, pompous little man is Eldebuck Thorm
Fendarl. He leads an army of 14 splendid knights. The knights defend the Palace, which serves as the Gate's mediocre inn. (It's cold, dank, drafty, and lacking in privacy and proper lighting of evenings.)
Expect to pay 10 gp for yourself and 4 gp for stabling each animal you bring for the honor of spending a night under the same roof as the High Knight-Emperor.

There's little reason to visit the Gate unless you're a wool or mutton merchant—or really enjoy eating. They do it in style here. But if you're a visitor, it's a tent outside the Palace for you. Only the High Knight-





Emperor and his "personal guests" (those who've paid his price or been invited) dine in the cavernous great hall. You'll be sharing the tent with locals, who mutter often about their good ruler's prohibition on building a proper inn or tavern in the Gate.

A day of feasting in the Gate starts with a morningfeast of thick-sliced roast boar (imagine a strip of bacon 2 inches thick) garnished with fruit (often—ugh!—quince) and encircled by mounds of cooked eggs whipped into a golden frothy lather and combined with milk and fine-chopped shoot onions or leeks. This is all washed down with twin tankards of cold ale and mulled, spiced cider to get the digestion going.

One has time for a quick stroll to the jakes (to continue the process begun by the ale and cider) before midmorningfest begins: a hot and cold meal of hot, thick soup or stew (usually a poultry and creamed-mushroom concoction, though it can be beef or venison with carrots in winter) and the cold leftovers of last night's feast (known to locals as the gnawbones). This is washed down with clear wine of any vintage you desire. (By the way, the Palace has the best wine cellar I've seen outside the City of Splendors itself.)

Take another stroll to settle your fare because highsunfest is not long in coming. Many locals miss this meal, being "too busy in the fields." Even the knights, who contrive to miss one other meal a day by being at practice of arms (when they're standing guard, platters are brought

to them by order of the High Knight-Emperor), usually escape this feast by riding far out over the fields to work the imperial falcons. Beware: The rodents and birds they bring back are promptly made into a stew with onions, parsnips, and lots of pepper for late evening snacks.

Those fortunate enough to linger for highsunfest will enjoy spiced melted cheese on buns (not bad at all) and the High Knight-Emperor's latest craze: cold cucumber soup. One is served a bowl of it as large as a soldier's helm, and at this meal his Imperial Altitude (by which title he must always be addressed, on pain of a tenday imprisonment and confiscation of all goods) makes the rounds of his subjects and guests, seeing that they eat their platters bare, pressing them to praise his cooks and the boundless bounty of the Gate, and telling the same stories of his ancestor Fendarl's heroism every day. Watch the locals smile and answer enthusiastically-and do likewise.

Eveningfest is the main meal of every day, featuring a variety of whole roast beasts. It used to boast stuffed stag's heads, until a sly mage used an *audible glamer* to make a head on a platter complain to the High Knight-Emperor about its slaying and grisly indignities heaped upon it in the kitchen. These roast delicacies taste better than they sound. They are stuffed with quail flesh, woodchuck, pheasant, and other small game cooked with spices and chopped onions.



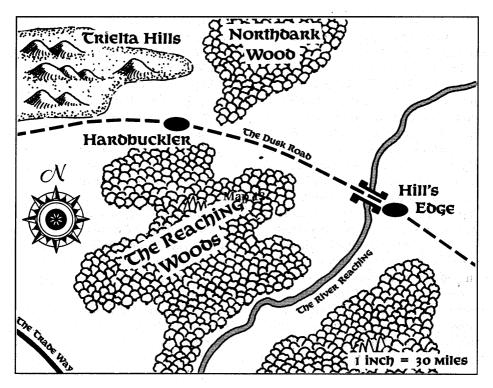
## Handbucklen

This small but important fortified village stands midway between Triel and Hill's Edge on the Dusk Road. Hardbuckler is named for a long-fallen dwarf adventurer who made his home here after he won a spectacular battle on this spot leading his small axe-throwing band, Hardbuckler's Hurlers, against a bugbear host. Hardbuckler has grown today into a village of over 2,000 folk—almost all of them gnomes.

Many humans think of gnomes as industrious, ridiculous little puttering fuss-budgets, who squeak excitedly as they run about doing crazed things with rope, pulleys, odd bits of

metal, and the like, building one dangerous contraption after another. Tales of gnome-built wonders that destroyed themselves explosively are legion. Most folk all over Faerûn think of gnomes as charming little incompetents, believing there's some inherent shortcoming in the race that will deny them ever building anything that truly functional, durable, and useful.

Like most world views, it seems this one is seriously flawed. Hardbuckler is a living example of efficient gnome industriousness at work. Among merchants traveling the Dusk Road, this small village is a favored stopover. Some folk love it so much they even winter here, helping





to defend the village against raiding wolves, orcs, bugbears, trolls, hobgoblins, and other hungry roving predators. Large, clanking contraptions, the supposed trademark of gnomes, are absent from the scene, except for rows of large, wheelcranked triple ballistae along the walls, used to decimate orc and brigand raiding bands. Hardbuckler is a model of cleanliness, organization, and happy prosperity.

Merchants love it. Aside from the occasional visiting thief, crime is unknown, the streets are safe, and the water for mounts and thirsty travelers alike is free.

Hardbuckler consists of small stone cottages with slate roofs. The cottages are set at random within its walled enclosure, each having a little garden patch somewhere near it. These gardens are fenced to prevent visiting livestock from grazing them bare. Streets are missing, except for a ring-shaped way running all around just inside the wall and two broad avenues that bisect the village in a cross shape. As one puffing thief once put it, "This place is all one big alley!"

Every home in Hardbuckler has a cellar—a *big* cellar. These cellars each typically include a junk room and a root cellar on the uppermost level, and a large ramp or shaft with cranked elevator leading down to a

mushroom- and lichen-growing cavern beneath, with warehouse caverns below that. (Ever eaten fried lichen from Hardbuckler? Delicious! They boil it soft, then fry it in gravy and serve it with garden-grown radishes. Try it!)

The major industry in Hardbuckler is storage—no questions asked, secure storage. Half a hundred merchant concerns—and even more adventuring bands—keep loot and other valuables here, hidden away and secure behind wards laid down by Hardbuckler's resident wizard, whose vigilance is an additional guard against theft.

The gnomes of Hardbuckler make and export elaborate locks, sturdy wooden crates, and a distinctive green seam-sealing wax sold in cloth rolls. Locks range in price from 3 gp for a small, simple thing to 100 gp for a massive quadruple lock, or 75 gp for a tiny, gold-plated locket lock used in many pieces of jewelry or on purses.

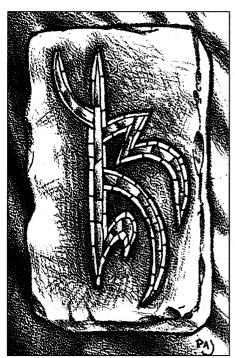
Crates range in price from 1 sp to 25 gp, depending on size and construction. Exterior bracing and copper-sheathed corners are always 5 gp extra. Most small coffers are 1 to 3 sp, and most larger boxes go for 2 gp, with a removable lid and one tube of seam-sealing wax included in their price. One person can carry a larger box alone for short distances, but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>There are 26 in place, so sited that at least six can fire at any given point of the cleared terrain surrounding the city. A ballista fires once per round if the crew of 3 is augmented by a "cranking crew" of 6 (gnomes; cut all crew figures in half if humans are involved). Without a full cranking crew, the rate of fire drops to once every 2 rounds. Range is 10 feet to 600 feet (due to the elevation of the ballistae, which boosts their range). Every firing of a ballista results in eight attacks being rolled against a group of foes (half that if the group is widely spaced, or in "skirmish formation"). Bolts that hit are giant heavy crossbow bolts, and do 1d12+1 points of damage to a creature.



these boxes also have rope handles thoughtfully included in their design to make them easy for two people to carry over a long haul.

Seam-sealing wax is 1 sp a tube. To use the wax, unroll one end of the cloth, squeeze the other, and force the wax out in a smooth cylinder along the edge of a box to seal a seam. A recent improved version is 1 gp a tube and is guaranteed to be reusable if oil is hand-worked into it every spring. It turns purple if any enchantment is laid on it—and if the magic is disturbed by an attempt to break the wax, alter the spell on it, or lay another spell atop the first, the wax turns green again, giving positive indication of tampering.



Ward Token of Hardbuckler

Every family in Hardbuckler operates its own storage facility and need not tell others (except the resident wizard) what it's minding—even if the stored goods consist of explosives, powerful and unstable magic, or such. There have only been three underground blasts in the history of the village, so storage is fairly secure.

The resident wizard of Hardbuck-ler is a kindly, elderly man with very poor sight. He wears three thick pairs of eyeglasses attached to each other on a common frame so that three lenses are fixed in front of each of his eyes. He is given to humming and wandering about the secret passages that encircle all the storage caverns beneath Hardbuckler, preventing tunneling up from below.

His name is Aldiber Inchtarwurn, and he is known to wear bracers at all times, one of which has all the powers of a *staff of power*, and the other which duplicates the effects of a *ring of spell turning*. He also possesses many magical rings, potions, and belt-ready items such as *beads of force* and *iron bands of Bilarro*.

Aldiber has created powerful wards protecting the walls of Hardbuckler and every storage cavern beneath it. Aldiber's wards block all passage of moisture through the cavern walls, preventing flooding and mildew from spoiling items in storage. The wards also give a visual—and to those bearing ward tokens, audible—alarm when they are breached.<sup>9</sup> They are said to pre-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>That is, penetrated by force or hostile spells, not passed by possession of a ward token.



vent many spells from functioning, and to summon crawling claws and more powerful guardian creatures when certain conditions are met. I was able to obtain a ward token (shown on the right-hand page), but was unable to learn more specifics of the powers of these wards—certain locals denounced me as a Zhentarim spy or thief, and offered me swift violence.

I was forced to leave Hardbuckler hastily, but you can read here what I did learn—and also some curious things I overheard: talk of the coming of a gnome king, and of the Openers, some sort of secretive band dedicated to finding, mapping, and unlocking the secrets of ancient magical *gates* under the village and nearby. "The wealth of Netheril shall be ours!" has become a whispered catch phrase of sorts among the young and idle of the village.

I also noticed a number of would-be adventurers from Amn, Water-deep, and the Coast—mostly romantic younger sons and daughters of nobles or wealthy folk—who'd taken up residence in rental cottages in a copse a few hills west of the village. This seems a place from whence news of adventure may soon come.

If that befalls, the mage Aldiber may be a bit put out. He likes peace and quiet and retired here to be far from the intrigues of cities. I heard he takes no apprentices, but devotes his time to helping the gnomes and studying magic, devising new spells

and items, and altering well-known spells. Folk believe he's created so many new spells that he could give Elminster himself a run for his staff and pointed hat.<sup>10</sup>

Hardbuckler is ruled by a council of gnome elders. They take advice and direction from the Hidden—not this mysterious incipient gnome king, I believe, but gnome priests who tend temples somewhere near the village—perhaps beneath its storage caverns, surrounding them with a band of vigilance. The only councilors' names I learned were Hammas Isynd and Orival Bundifeather. I've no idea if they were leaders, senior members, or just those most comfortable dealing with human visitors.

A stay in Hardbuckler costs 1 gp per person to pass in through the gates, plus 1 sp per beast brought in. This entitles you to free fodder and water.

There are no inns or tayerns in the village. Each gnome family runs its own guesthouse, which serves good, though simple, meals, running to lots of spiced potatoes, onion bread, and strong cheese. (The prominent gnome families in Hardbuckler are Althryn, Boldnose, Bundifeather, Eyindul, Felndar, Felold, Gornsh, Isynd, Khobbar, and Wyndass.) Ale is about 10 gp per hand keg, and wine 5 gp per bottle priced so to discourage overindulgence, I suppose. There is also a gaming pavilion, the Pipe and Ivories, where drinkers can gather.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>When he read this, Elminster snorted—and then sighed.



# Hill's Edge

This city is sometimes called the Forgotten City of Sunset Vale. Many folk on the Sword Coast and in the Inner Sea lands alike simply forget it exists. Many guides and histories omit it or gloss over it as if it were a minor village or waystop well. Even recent accounts call it a town and refer to it as small but prosperous.

Yet Hill's Edge is, and always has been, an interesting place. Its location at the western end of Yellow Snake Pass has brought it both monster raids and caravan trade down the years-and with the advent of the Zhentarim, the former have declined but the latter have increased, making the Dark Network a force to be reckoned with in this city. Here Zhents are tolerated, if not liked, but the independent-minded citizens-many of whom are powerful and experienced adventurers-have made it clear to more than one emissary of Darkhold that any attempt to conquer Hill's Edge or even harass its citizenry by magic, poison, unfair trade practices, or threats will bring Waterdhavian armies assisted by senior Harpers into the city for an all-out battle.

The High Mayor of Hill's Edge who last made this declaration was Asimel Elendarryl, a sorceress who hailed from Neverwinter, and was openly an agent of the Lords' Alliance. She claimed that over 40 citizens knew the locations of and ways to open over a, score of magical *gates* hidden all over

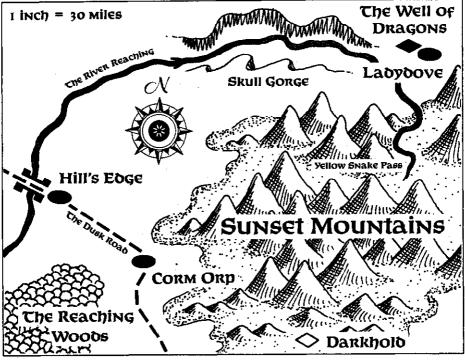
the city that could bring these forces swiftly into the city. Asimel vanished some months after her term of office ended. Cynics in the city mutter that Zhentarim torturers got her, but it is known that Zhentarim agents in the city have been actively searching for the alleged *gates* since her disappearance.

On more than one occasion known Harpers *have* suddenly appeared in the city, though some citizens believe they came by means of spells, deliberately attempting to fool the Zhentarim into thinking the *gates* do exist. Control of any center containing so many instant transportation routes would be the greatest prize in Faerûn short of conquering Myth Drannor.

This tense situation, with agents of the Red Wizards, the Cult of the Dragon, the Zhentarim, and probably a dozen or more wizards' cabals and merchant companies sniffing around Hill's Edge looking for gates, is made worse by the character of the citizenry. Inhabitants of Hill's Edge are a wary, self-sufficient lot. Many are seasoned adventurers and guides. Monster hunting, combined with a little exploring and prospecting, is the traditional local sport. Most everyone is skilled with a weapon, 11 and the smithies of Hill's Edge turn out hundreds of armors and thousands of blades each year-in fact, this city is the source of much of the average-topoor, but serviceable, weaponry and battle harness used all over western Faerûn.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>After discussions with Elminster, we judge that this can fairly be expressed in AD&D game terms by saying that most everyone on the streets is at least a 4th- or 5th-level fighter.





The city's name comes not from any hill, but from a long-dead adventurer, the halfling warrior Uldobris Downhill. He found rich iron in the red eastern bank of the River Reaching here and took on gnome partners to build and maintain pumps to keep the river waters from flooding his mine, which was dubbed the Edge because it was always on the brink of flooding. Miners dug feverishly to the din of the constantly hammering pumps, tossing ore onto skids that mules dragged up to the surface. In six short years the consortium Uldobris had founded, the Clasped Hands, brought up more iron than had ever been taken out of one mine before. In the seventh year, the waters came in.

The flooded, unstable tunnels of the Edge still lie beneath the city, sloping sharply down and southeast. Local rumors as to just what inhabits them now vary widely—from freshwater morkoth to aquatic liches—but seem to agree that something sinister dwells in the lightless waters now. Five separate gnome-led pump-out attempts of the Edge over the years have ended in the sudden disappearance of all the delvers.

Hill's Edge began as a fort built to protect the minehead and smelter and grew into a walled town of smithies and outfitters, serving as a base for hunters and prospectors venturing north and east into the Sunset Mountains and the Reaching



uplands. It has grown steadily, becoming a waybase for merchant concerns.

Warehouses now occupy a lot of the space inside the city walls. Their owners dwell above the storage areas. Hill's Edge exports steady streams of oiled and crated armor, crated finished weapons and oiled bundles of sword blades, and caged exotic beasts of all sorts. If one wants a monster or a few of its body parts anywhere in western Faerûn, the source, sometimes via several middlemen, is usually the hunters of Hill's Edge.

If life in Hill's Edge seems a perilous, exciting existence to the reader-it is. A steady stream of would-be prospectors and adventurers come to the Old Edge. Many dwarven delvings and the cellars or burial areas of both Netheril and vanished giant kingdoms are known to lie in the Reaching uplands and farther north. Hill's Edge has always been the base for those eager to explore them. Talk in the taverns of the Edge is always of the latest finds and foraysof old, fey magic found and monsters fought. It's no wonder that the Zhentarim hunger to rule here, or that the Harpers and the Lords will do all they can to prevent that. It seems a splendid home for those who thirst for adventure—and perhaps death that may come to them swift and soon.

There's another important feature of the Edge that the visitor should know about if he wants to understand the tavern talk: the silent runs. Hill's Edge has always funded the rebuilding, lengthening, and strengthening of its walls with a gate tithe of 1 gp per wagon traveling in either direction. Folk on foot are free, but a mule train is counted as one wagon for every two mules. The Zhentarim and the Free Traders of Westgate have always used many hideouts and subterfuges to smuggle goods into and out of the city tax free. The most famous of these are the silent runs: networks of storage caverns and long tunnels under the city wall from far away linked to warehouses in the center of the city. Battles for control of the silent runs over the last decade have been furious, claiming many victims. Hungry monsters were unleashed into the passages, and traps were set up in profusion all over them until the runs became too dangerous to use and were abandoned to the marauding beasts and the desperate. If locals find these outer entrances nowadays, they usually hire a mage to permanently, suddenly, and violently close the tunnels.

#### Landmarks

Hill's Edge is a city of cobbled streets and sturdy stone buildings with slate and tile roofs. Large warehouses hulk everywhere, and all the (nameless) streets are broad enough to allow a team of six horses or oxen to turn a wagon around. In an open plaza at the center of the city rises the Mayor's Tower. The mayor has a bodyguard of 12 warriors, and another 20 soldiers collect the gate tax and keep watch from the walls and on all who enter or leave the city, but there is no militia, civ guard, or army. The Traders' Council,



which advises the mayor, wants to keep it that way (The Traders' Council meets in the Tower once a tenday, and more frequently in emergencies.)

As a result, this is a city of private bodyguards and lookouts hired by well-armed merchants who guard themselves and their wares at all times. The merchants' homes tend to be atop their warehouses or near the city walls, where the smithies, paddocks, most of the rooming houses and failed businesses can be found, too. I saw at least two score boarded-up, abandoned buildings during my visit.

The inns, taverns, and prosperous shops of the city tend to be clustered along the streets radiating out from the central Tower. There's no open marketplace in the Edge—instead, stalls can be found all around the city wall on its inside. (They are icy-cold quarters in winter, I'm told.)

Hill's Edge has a high stone wall surrounding it studded with many watchtowers and pierced by four gates: the Reaching Gate on the northeast, Rivergate on the northwest, Vale Gate on the southeast, and Clasped Hands Gate on the southwest. Perhaps 6,000 folk call Hill's Edge home in winter, and 10,000 can be found inside its walls in summer. It's fairly small, and the wide streets make for quick travel. It has a reputation for winter cold harsh enough to kill many folk every year.

The visitor to Hill's Edge shouldn't miss the Tarnished Trumpet tavern, the fabled Six Soft Furs festhall—located a stone's throw from the Mayor's Tower—or the Happy Hippocampus inn. (Local lore insists a mayor built the

Six Soft Furs so close for quick and easy visits.) Other drinking spots I saw were the Scarlet Stag and the Dancing Bear. Both were rustic, smoky, crowded, dim, and of little account.

Other inns include the Worried Wyvern, the Storm Griffin, and the Stone Saddle. Rooming houses can be found by the score. You'll recognize them for the three amber lamps hanging over their doors. Most are cold, dirty, dingy places where you can share a room with several rats who feel just as chilly as you do. For a tenday, the room is usually 1 sp per day, or for a month, it runs a copper a day plus an extra 1 sp "for the doorstep." Cooking is extra. "For the hearth" costs are generally 3 cp per day.

Hill's Edge boasts two temples: the Cry of Joy, dedicated to Lliira, and the Fist of the Future, sacred to Cyric. There are also shrines to Tempus and Tymora: the Old Sharp Sword, perched within sight of the Mayor's Tower; and the Kiss of the Lady, located hard by the Reaching Gate.

Notable shops in the Old Edge include A Handful of Eyes, Lionstar Services, the Knight in the Morn, Belkin's Black Blade, and Bent Bows. A Handful of Eyes is perhaps the most reliable of the monster shops, and Lionstar Services is the discreet small goods handling outlet of Lionstar Warehouses. The Knight in the Morn is an armorer and blazoner, Belkin's sells superior weapons, and Bent Bows, as its name implies, is an archery shop.

The visitor to Hill's Edge should note that although the Zhentarim presence grows ever stronger in Hill's Edge, the



Dark Network has received several sharp rebukes (that is, sharp as in sword points) from citizens whom they tried to cheat, threaten, or bribe at too low a price. The Zhentarim pressure has made fewer folk than ever want the thankless task of being High Mayor for a year—but every candidate in anyway supported or influenced by the Zhentarim has been decisively refused by the electors. The Traders' Council is running the city at present while they seek a new High Mayor from among the returning prospectors and adventurers.

Overshadowing all the political tensions in town is the ongoing conflict between the Rose-Red Lady and the Black Lady, the high priestesses who lead the two rival temples in town. They wage an endless duel for supremacy in what passes for high society in the Edge—as well as in its alleyways, cellars, and spell chambers. When one temple gathers for an important ritual, the other does too, just in case the "villains" in the other temple plan any magical assault. Like the Zhentarim, the two priesthoods have eyes everywhere in the city. Unless you have power enough to withstand and hurl back the magics of an aroused temple, it is best not to openly support one side or another. You have been warned.

## Places of Interest in Hill's Edge Temples

The Cry of Joy

The star-mantled, orange-, red-, and yellow-robed priestesses of Lliira tend to be beautiful, acrobatic, and silver-

throated. They pass on jokes, make merry, and generally provide much of the gaiety and color in Hill's Edge. The Harpers always provide music at their festivals—wild parties to which all folk in the city are invited. Harpers also covertly provide security during these events, foiling hostile magic and deliberate disruptions.

The only enemies these Joymaidens have are the followers of the Dark Sun, Cyric, and the local professional escorts, who view the festivals as very bad for trade. In the escorts' opinion, revelers get free what the escorts expect folk to pay for. This is the only reason, aside from the free drink, many say cattily and spitefully, that anyone goes to one of these revels at all.

The Cry of Joy resembles a miniature castle. Little larger than a prosperous manor, it sports high stone walls, a portcullis, and turrets adorned with Lliira's yellow, orange, and red star-girt banners. Its coffers bulge from two sources of income: superb blackbitter ale brewed in the temple cellars and exported all over Faerûn, and best-selling chapbooks of amorous adventure penned anonymously by the clergy—and also sold all over Faerûn.

The Lliirans are led by a young, enthusiastic reveler, Joybringer Caseldown. She works in secret with Harpers (well, her plans are secret, though most folk know meetings go on) to see to the security and cultural growth of Hill's Edge, so that it continues to be a pleasant place to live. There's a rumor around the city these days that the Joybringer has strange magical powers.



#### The Fist of the Future

The black banners on the walls of this frowning war fortress of a temple are all adorned with the skull and starburst of Cyric. They stare coldly at all who walk the streets, and like pirate flags, they make citizens and visitors alike reach for weapons and watch warily.

The Cyricists in Hill's Edge are a fast-growing group, sponsored by Zhentarim gold and the energy of the ambitious High Dark Priestess Emana Gortho. She seems bent on turning the city into a huge robber-baron's hold and is fast attracting all the down-on-their luck rogues, thugs, and crazed-wits in the Vale with promises of good gold, and good beer and brotherhood to go with it, with regular opportunities for bullying and bloodletting. She now has hundreds of dark hands to do her bidding, but they are ill-trained, undisciplined, and essentially selfish hands, and have several times defied the orders of priests leading them to pursue ready loot and foes.

Mysterious spell attacks have twice ruined armories and engines of war smuggled into the temple, smashing plans for an uprising, destruction of the temple to Lliira, and the establishment of martial rule over the city. Emana suspects Harper spies of causing the assaults, though she has no idea which powerful wizards they hired or cajoled into making the actual attacks. On both occasions, word was all over the city in hours, accompanied by the general opinion that such doings were to be expected, because: "We don't like folk bringing armies

into this town or whelming for war."

The High Dark Priestess has accordingly turned to ever darker and wilder spells, accompanied by risky attempts at spellcasting in groups, sacrifices, and summonings of powerful evil beings from other planes. She speaks openly of such things, trying to awe citizens into obedience or flight, but has so far misread the folk of Hill's Edge, who've merely turned to planning how best to bring about her downfall.

#### Shops

#### A Handful of Eyes

Monster Parts and Live Monsters

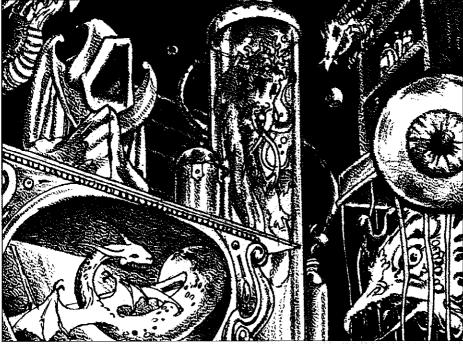


This dark, cavernous converted old warehouse is a labyrinth of creaking pillars, rusting cross braces, sagging floors, and little flights of steps linking levels that don't *quite* meet. Cages of all sizes are everywhere. Citizens whisper that folk who argue prices too strenuously sometimes disappear into them.

This shop is lit by a dozen or so glowing white eyeballs that float about like curious insects, hovering to inspect or accompany shoppers with an unblinking gaze that most folk find eerie: The proprietor is a masked, hooded male who seems able to see whatever the eyes can, however distant, and who is thought to be a mind flayer by at least one regular supplier of the shop.

For all this eccentricity, A Handful of Eyes is probably the most reliable of the monster shops in Hill's Edge—





that is, it can most quickly supply a particular beast, dead or alive, to a purchaser, and it carries a larger stock than competitors, some of whom deal only in a few species (such as Eldritch Ebony, a shop that discreetly deals in drow to very rich and totally unscrupulous buyers). Most buyers are merchants acting for wealthy, decadent thrillseekers or mages in Calimshan, Waterdeep, Sembia, Amn, and the city-states around the Sea of Fallen Stars.

A live monster can cost from 25 gp for a particular type of nonpoisonous rat, spider, or snake to 350,000 or more for a ki-rin or other rare or powerful creature. The Eyes does not deal in slaves, nor does it kidnap humans for a fee—not since a captive

wizard blew apart the southern end of the shop with an unexpected spell and escaped.

Lionstar Services

Packers



This shop is a ramshackle wing of the vast Lionstar Warehouses complex out by the wall in the northeast quadrant of the city. For modest fees, the experienced packers here will securely pack and seal all sorts of small shipments (precious or fragile items, for instance) for caravan travel all over Toril. Their specialty is disguising an item by its packaging to make it appear to be something else. This generally costs double. False



documentation can cost 100 gp on top of that—more if it involves forging the signature or seal of a mage, ruler, merchant company, noble family head, or other important personage.

Lionstar Services has several wizards on retainer to magically examine, shield, or protect parcels. Their services cost extra—a lot extra! Exactly how much depends, of course, on just what they have to do.

#### The Knight in the Morn

Armorer and Blazoner



This proud, colorful shop sells suits of armor, some of which look very grand. They vary from mediocre (the source of the old wisecrack: "Ah, Sir Rustbucket. Knighted in Hill's Edge, I presume?") to not bad. They also sell lances and shields, but some shields have been known to crumple under a single blow. To top the lances, they sell pennants and full-sized banners.

The need to adorn these banners has expanded over the years from two old women skilled with the needle to a staff of six seamstresses and four master limners. You can order your shield, breastplate, helm, or anything else adorned with your badge, coat-of-arms, or favorite color.

Such adornments typically cost 60 gp each for painted work and 100 gp for sewn. This shop is usually at odds with Hillhorn, the local Herald, for allowing patrons to walk out wearing arms and badges that properly belong to others. In the past, much of the shop's trade came from brigands

intending to impersonate others to effect swindles, kidnappings, and the darkening of certain reputations.

This is still the place to come if you want a blazon of your own design painted—a blazon, that is, that's not lawfully registered with, or recognized by, the Heralds. The shop gets away with this practice by claiming they were told the work was a first flower (the painting of arms made by a supplicant to show to a Herald in hopes of getting the design approved). The close watch now kept on the shop by Harpers makes criminal use of the arms of others less likely to be profitable, but as a place to get fanciful arms painted up, or those intended forever to be fictitious, the shop continues to do a roaring trade.

Note that all blazonwork that comes to the shop without written certification from a Herald will cost double. Regular patrons of the shop tell me its lances are of excellent quality.

#### Belkin's Black Blade

Weapons Shop



In contrast to the haughty splendor of the Knight in the Morn, this place is a "down-to-earth, hard-core weapons shop: a large, dimly lit house that smells of oil and cold steel and is crammed with racks of swords, daggers, maces, morning stars, war hammers, spears, arrows, bolts, and battle axes.

Belkin Orgul is a fat, puffing, shrewd old warrior who stumps and wheezes around the shop, forever pushing unruly gray-white hair out of his eyes to



glare at customers. He sells helms, gorgets, and gauntlets as well as weapons. Spike-knuckled gauntlets are a perennial favorite at 25 gp for the pair.

#### **Bent Bows**

Archery Shop



This is one of the best archery shops I've seen anywhere: a bright, breezy place where one can buy any size of bow or crossbow. One can also purchase, of course, all sizes of shafts and bolts and a variety of arrowheads, including bulbous fireheads guaranteed not to go out before striking their target. These heads are cast spheres containing felt that are doused in alcohol and lit before firing.

Adventurers and merchants alike come here to buy wagonloads of shafts and bolts. If one buys 10 guaranteed-waterproof leather quivers of 21 missiles each or more, it's at a discount price of 6 sp each, instead of the usual 1 gp.

The proprietor, Master Fletcher Sumbarl Ardusk, is expert at detecting out-of-true shafts, and at soaking, stretching, and spot heating to make them straight.

#### Taverns The Scarlet Stag



This drinking hall is of the smokefilled, rowdy, rustic sort. I found the tables and booths cramped and crowded, and the servers both surly and harried; moreover, some clever guest seems to enjoy hurling chestnuts at random around the darkened taproom. One plopped into my tankard, but a woman nearby was struck on the temple and dazed. Go to get drunk if you must, but don't expect to relax or chat in any sort of quiet.

#### The Dancing Bear



This dive is like the Stag but noisier, dirtier, and more dangerous. Here patrons play with hurled daggers, and there's a steady stream of supplicants shuffling to trade scraps of information for the few coppers needed for another drink or two to the tables where Zhentarim spies and their bodyguards sit.

The Bear is not a place one dare relax in. I saw two purse cuttings while I was there, and when the second victim noticed and rounded on the thief, he got a blade in his throat and another in his ribs. The thief was out one of the three side doors before the body slumped to the floor.

Others share my opinion. The tavern does a brisk trade in carry-out skins of (watered-down) wine at 4 sp each.

There's no bear dancing about in accordance with the tavern's name. Its stuffed head snarls down from over the bar, eyes red and glittering thanks to a little glass and a cantrip. I was not impressed.

# INNS The Worried Wyrvern

SES BBB

This is the closest Hill's Edge comes to an average inn of quality—a clean,



three-level, fairly new establishment boasting interconnected suites of rooms on the uppermost floor, messenger pigeon service to an errandrunning service in Iriaebor, and a good dining room. The chef has mastered a spiced river fish and asparagus omelet to accompany the usual bacon, toast and drippings, and sausages for morningfest and highsunfest. Evening meals are a nice variety of roasts, accompanied by pleasant surprises like chicken livers in mushroom sauce and green peppers stuffed with rice, tomatoes, and ground meat. A rather bad, bored harpist plays away the evenings, making background music to drown out conversations at adjacent tables. A safe and pleasant, if unexciting waystop.

#### The Storm Griffin

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Travelers can easily find this downtown inn thanks to the rampant stone griffon statue out front. It's as tall as the three-story inn behind it and from time to time spectacular but harmless illusory lightnings flash and crawl over its surface. It was once the figurehead of the favorite ship of the inn's builder, who was a rich textiles merchant.

The inn beyond it is surprisingly good. Rooms are cozily and sometimes luxuriously furnished, and the services of in-house barbers/coiffeurs, tailors, and custom shoemakers are available for extra fees. Bath servants carry hot water to the tubs in each room and assist in bathing if desired. Their services are free. For a copper one of six hall boys will carry messages or small

items anywhere in the city. (By all accounts, they're trustworthy.)

The dining room is excellent, specializing in delicious hot and cold soups, fried breads, and fish stuffed with egg, leek, and river crab mixtures. At its best, the kitchen of the Griffin matches anything to be had in proud, distant Waterdeep.

#### The Stone Saddle

SS BB

This cheap, chilly old barn prides itself on good stables and hostlers. I dare say mounts get better care than their owners. Still, doors bolt securely, and the beds are comfortable, but sag somewhat in the middle. If you don't mind indifferent food, such as meatballs of mysterious origin in onion-dominated tomato broth, this is a cheap, tolerable place to sleep.

# Festhalls Six Soft Furs

This house of pleasure is famous Valewide for its luxuries, wanton escorts, and flavored syrup baths that are rarely enjoyed alone. Rumored to have been built by a mayor (to attract tourists, of course), it boasts very high prices indeed—an evening's pleasure can easily cost 300 gp. Some escorts here specialize in a combination of pleasant (and surprisingly learned) conversation and kneading out the pain from long journeys and old battle injuries with their hands and feet, for those who don't want to indulge in the exotic.



## The Tarnished Trumpet

Tavern



This tavern faces the Mayor's Tower across the open cobbles and is the largest and best drinking spot in Hill's Edge, On most evenings, even in the bitterest winter weather, it's crowded with jovial adventurers swapping stories of their bravery, close escapes, and latest finds in the Netherese ruins north and east of the city.

A blackened, battered trumpet hangs behind the bar. More than a few folk in town say it's an iron horn of Valhalla the bartender can blow to defend the tavern against attack. This rumor is supported by the fact that all of the six folk—four men and two women—who tend bar around the clock (a water-drip model from far Chessenta, that chimes tiny bells to mark the hours) always wear swords at their hips and daggers in various spots.

Many of the prospectors who work out of Hill's Edge view the Trumpet as their home, even though they sleep somewhere else. The staff encourages them to think so, keeping messages for prospectors out in the mountains, and providing comfy old armchairs and a fireplace to warm wet feet and dry wet stockings and hose at around the side of the bar.

#### The Place

Wood-paneled, many-pillared, and decorated with tapestries of hunting

scenes and the battered weapons of now-deceased patrons, the tavern is almost all one vast taproom. The tops of the drinking tables are inset with little windows. Old treasure maps have been set between panes of glass in them, and beneath each is a small cage enclosing a glowing globe, so light comes up through the map to illuminate the tabletop. Patrons who try to take a map out will be expelled violently and permanently. Copies of all the maps are available at the bar for 50 gp each. Most of the maps are 20 to 30 winters old and are of mines and subterranean cellars and ways in the wildernesses north of Skull Gorge or in western Yellow Snake Pass.

Be warned that the Zhentarim purchased copies of all these maps long ago, as have many other adventuring bands. Few easily found treasures can be left in any of the places the maps show. On the other hand, tales make the rounds every three seasons or so of adventurers poking around old, cleaned-out dungeons who found a secret way others had missed and broke through into treasure-laden, hitherto hidden, areas.

#### The Prospect

This tavern is the place to hear news of adventurers and their deeds, join a band or hire adventurers to aid you in deeds of daring and danger, or just to reflect on past glories, stare at the fading maps and tapestries, and dream a little. Some minstrels make a point of doing this, claiming they get their best song ideas in the convivial Trumpet. This is one of the





most relaxed, friendly, chatty bars in all the Vale.

#### The Provender

Hot buttered rolls and sausage rolls are the only food the Trumpet serves. Its wine cellar has an awesome breadth, however, and the flagons and tankards in use on the premises are of a generous size.

#### The Prices

Ale is 4 cp per talltankard or 8 cp per hand keg, and wine is either anonymous house wine at 5 cp per flagon or a recognized vintage sold by the bottle (7 sp to 22 gp). Zzar, sherries, and all exotics (such as elverquisst) are sold by the bottle at 4 gp to 125 gp (most are 6 to 8 gp).

#### Travelers' Lore

The Trumpet houses several legends of hidden treasure. One speaks of a secret door in a pillar. It hides a turn handle that flips up a large floor section, table and all, to reach a gold cellar guarded by mysterious monsters.

Another speaks of a cordial glass formed of one enormous carved diamond the size of a petite elf's fist. It was said to be able to render any liquid placed in it nonpoisonous and pleasant to the palate. A visitor to the bar, a dusky noblewoman, turned it invisible as a prank, and a clumsy-fingered thief knocked it to the taproom floor. No one has ever found the glass, and incidences of patrons tripping over nothing (perhaps from excess drink or a loose floorboard) are often blamed on kicking it.



### The Happy Hippocampus

Inn

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This inn deserves to be much better known. It's one of the best in western Faerûn, complete with an attentive liveried staff who pamper guests personally, a hot communal tub with scented water (clouded with lavender to preserve the modesty of bathers), and food among the best anywhere.

#### The Place

The Happy Hippocampus is a low-ceilinged, carpeted place of many lamps and plants. Lounges (including the baths) surround the circular dining room. From the curving hallways that encircle the dining room ascend broad stairs to large rooms that feature curtained, canopied beds.

Guest chambers are suites, each having a bathing chamber (garderobes therein magically flush themselves clean with water!), a dressing room with a full-length glass, and a writing desk with parchment, ink, and quills. Oysters, pickled falcon eggs, and garlic-buttered biscuits—all accompanied by white wine—are available in every room.

Thick walls keep rooms quiet. Windows are sealed and have multiple panes of glass to banish all drafts and minimize winter chill.

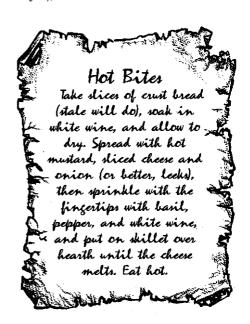
#### The Prospect

The skilled, thoughtful human staff anticipates most guests' needs (warmed

towels and robes are set ready for patrons who bathe, for example), but can always be summoned by pulling one of the purple cords that hang on the walls of every room and passage in the inn. A rooftop garden provides fresh tomatoes and greens for salads, and gives guests a private place to sit amid greenery and relax. Far below, extensive cellars give safe storage to guests' valuables, an impressive wine cellar, and large, defensible pantries.

#### The Provender

The dining room at the Hippocampus serves the usual roasts and fowl dishes with flair, along with marvelous gravies and sauces. The soups are delightful, and I especially liked the appetizers known as hot bites. I managed to get the recipe for these open-faced sandwiches from one of the chefs (thank you, Alayss), and here it is:





#### The Prices

Rooms are 16 gp a head per night, and stabling is 2 gp extra. Eveningfeast (including all drinks) costs 2 gp. All other meals are free with a room, but drinks cost extra. Liqueurs run 4 or more gp per bottle. Ales are 1 sp per tankard, and wines are 3 gp to 75 gp per bottle (most are 4 gp to 7 gp).

#### Travelers' Lore

The Hippocampus was briefly home to the Proud Pegasi adventuring band. Led by a female mage of spirit, beauty, and quick wits (Bellara "Starcloak" Arune, a merchant's daughter from Amn), the Pegasi went from success to success, finding a string of fallen mage towers and Netherese ruins. Some say tanar'ri aided their searches, others that Bellara devised a spell that let her read the brains of Netherese lich-mages, holding them in thrall from afar. Whatever the truth, the Pegasi found a *lot* of treasure.

When agents of the Zhentarim stole from them, Bellara mounted a return raid on Darkhold. Gathered Zhentarim mages destroyed the band with mighty spells. Through a *contingency*, the spirit of Bellara fled into a life-size gemmed statue supposedly hidden in the Hippocampus.

Some say that the statue was formed in Bellara's image, and others contend that it was of a rearing pegasi. Since no one has ever found a statue of either kind here, adventurers who stay at the inn still hope to find the statue, resurrect Bellara, and claim as their reward a portion of the treasure that the Zhents didn't get



# Hluthvar

This walled town on the Dusk Road lies in the shadow of Darkhold and is less a trading town than a fortress against the Zhentarim. <sup>12</sup> The town's mayor, magistrate, and military ruler is Maurandyr High Ward (priest) of the House of the Guardian, the local temple of Helm.

Hluthvar was a local warrior-hero. The town that preserves his name now stands as the front-line wall against armies that would otherwise sweep down from Darkhold unchecked to raid at will up and down the Vale. In this vigilant stance, Maurandyr is financially supported by the Harpers, the Lords' Alliance, and other rulers and places in the Vale.

This does not make Hluthvar a welcoming place to visit. Built of stone and slate to retard fires, it can muster a militia of over 70 well-trained and equipped warriors—one from nearly every family in town. Groups of them clad in plate mail can be seen practicing with swords and crossbows every day under the watchful eyes of priests.

The temple also hires adventurers by the month at 100 gp per each to ride wide patrols around the town to keep watch on patrol groups and raiders out of Darkhold. "Put the dark ones to the sword whenever you can" is their standing order.

Hluthvar is built like a giant wheel, with its streets as the spokes and the rim and a large open market as the central hub. The north—south "spoke" of the wheel is missing. On the north

side of the market stands the House of the Guardian (with a large buy/sell/trade livery stable and the militia armory north of it), and on the south side stands a wagonwain's shop and the sole inn in town, the Watchful Eye. The temple maintains a stable of milk cows and a chicken house (both easily located by the smell). The priests—who always go armed—stride about like sword captains, giving orders as if the town were at war.

Rental space warehouses ring and flank these important buildings. The rest of the town consists of seven covered wells, a few shops, and homes. The wells are set up as small, defensible keeps topped by onagers that can hurl stones at attackers outside the city walls. Every roof and every cellar is planted for growing mushrooms or root crops. To discourage drunkenness, there's no tavern, and visitors to town who stray from the inn or local market are viewed as little better than spies.

Most folk in Hluthvar work deep in their cellars, delving ever deeper in search of gold, which is plentiful in the rock hereabouts, and perhaps Netherese or other ruins below. Some 30 winters ago, someone did break through into an old dwarven hold, and it's now provisioned as a safehold for the townsfolk to retreat to if Hluthvar is overrun.

The folk of Hluthvar have lived with fear of the Zhentarim for a long time, but right now they're wrestling with a new fear. Their revered leader, Maurandyr, may be going mad. Several

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Hluthavar's location can be seen on the map in the entry on Asbravn, earlier in this chapter.



times recently he's fainted or spoken and acted strangely. Some say these incidents are the result of the strain of command. Others whisper they are signs of the displeasure of Helm or—and this is the dark opinion of most—caused by some sort of magical assault from the evil Zhentarim wizards.

I recommend travelers avoid Hluthvar except as a secure place to stay a single night on the road before moving on. The temple rents stark and simply furnished rooms at 10 gp a head to those who don't want to stay at the inn. Sights are few, joy even rarer, and prospects for trade slim. Hluthvar needs more of everything, and has little to give in return. Life here is as good an argument for destroying the Zhentarim as anything I've seen or heard anywhere in the Coast lands.

# Places of Interest in Hluthvar Temples

## The House of the Guardian

This temple to Helm resembles a keep. It has its own moat and spiked iron fence—which can be electrified by spells in the event of attack, I'm told—along with ballistae and armories inside. The uppermost chamber is a stark chancel, the altar being an upright sword, the unblinking eye of Helm glowing on its pommel.

Over 20 warrior-priests dwell here, working ceaselessly by spell and training in arms to strengthen Hluthvar as "the wall against the darkness." They are grim folk, always alert for spies, weak-

nesses, and ways in which they can deal harm to the forces of Darkhold.

# Shops

### Trist's Saddles and Stables

Mounts and Tack



Irythimm Trist is a sharp-nosed, watchful man who drives a hard bargain but avoids all deceit. If you buy a mount or pack animal from him, you'll get exactly as good a beast as he says you will—all-in-all, a rare and precious thing.

# Veloth's Fine Wagons and Repairs

Wagons, Wheels, and Repairs



Uln Veloth is a man of exaggeration, histrionics, and hand-wringing. He can *never* do what you want in the scant time you give him—but always does. His skilled craftspeople grin at his wailing a lot and calmly turn out top-quality wagons, wheels, axles, and overnight repairs. Fees are stiff, and payable up front, but the work is sturdy.

# INN

The Watchful Eye





The Watchful Eye is a cheerless place that serves stolid food and watered-down beer. It has shutters and a roof and not much else. Its one virtue is that it's quiet—almost too quiet, like the calm before a vicious storm. Still, you can definitely fall asleep easily here if the hard beds don't keep you awake.



# Iriaebor

This city is sometimes called the Overland City because it's the east-ernmost outpost of the Vale and carries caravan trade on the Dusk Road over the rapids and cataracts of the upper Chionthar, linking up with the Trader's Road that runs east to the Sea of Fallen Stars. Barges cannot get any farther upriver than the lower docks of Iriaebor.

Built atop a defensible ridge long ago, Iriaebor today is a cramped city of many tall, crumbling towers leaning on each other or standing close together, joined by bridges and bristling with balconies, so that most of the narrow, winding streets are left permanently in shadow. 13 This has earned Iriaebor the name of City of a Thousand Spires. The stables, stockyards, caravan paddocks, warehouses, and the like sprawl across the farmland around the ridge. Aside from an open market where the Dusk Road enters the city, there are no open spaces left within the walls.

Travelers are advised to beware the constant, many-layered, often violent intrigues between the many merchant houses, families, and cabals of the city. Iriaebor is like Waterdeep gone mad when it comes to merchant manipulations, chicanery, and maneuvering.

Zhentarim machinations achieved the brief but iron-hard rule of the Zhentarim sorceress Lord Ravendas over the city. She attempted to unearth some sort of dangerous Shadowking and his shadow magic from beneath the city. Since that time, the Harpers of Berdusk have kept a close watch on Iriaebor.

The city is presently ruled by Bron. He was the peoples' choice for his principles of fairness above all. He serves as the city's judge, and he appoints and dismisses members of a 40-person advisory council. Aided behind the scenes in one way by the Harpers—and in another by the head of the current local thieves' guild, Cormik—the Lord of Iriaebor manages to keep this city of bitter merchant rivals from erupting in bloodshed from one wall to another.

Visitors are advised to beware all the rivalries. Even experienced traders are regularly fleeced, though the dark days of throat-slitting and all-yourgoods Zhentarim confiscations are gone—at least for now. Bron sacrificed his own position and most of the money of the temple to Eldath he headed at the time to buy mercenaries enough to slaughter the private armies that rival merchants were hurling at each other. The hatreds that fueled the open warfare then still simmer behind closed faces today, awaiting any chance to come boiling bloodily out.

Iriaebor's location and strong army make it a base or destination sought by many. (The army, the Shield, is 8,000 warriors strong.) For those who must deal in this den of commerce, I can provide only an overview of prominent places. Shops, companies, and fashion-favored places change with every tenday.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>A map of Iriaebor can be found in FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures hardbound.



# Landmarks

The ridge on which old Iriaebor was built runs parallel to the river and divides the city into three parts. The most southerly of these is the narrow strip of land between the river and the ridge, crowded with warehouses, docks, boatbuilding slips, muddy wagon trails, and heaps of garbage, which is called the Docks. Next is the ridge itself, called the Old City, its rocky slopes crowned with the forest of stone towers inhabited by the most successful (most ruthless, many folk would say) merchants. Most of the important buildings in Iriaebor can be found here. The northernmost and largest district of Iriaebor is composed of the flatlands that have been enclosed by the city wall. They are known as the Lower City. Here can be found the shops and houses of the common folk and laborers, the open market, stables, tanneries, slaughterhouses and other noisome industries, and two fenced merchant coster waybases: a major base of the Thousandheads Trading Coster and a smaller center of the Dragoneye Dealing Coster. The city exports many fine horses from the surrounding farmlands of the Vale, kegs and barges, and a lot of fairly bad beer.

Iriaebor is home to three important temples: Silent Hall, dedicated to Eldath (once Bron's charge); the Golden Bowl of the Goddess, a temple of Chauntea; and the High Altar of the Moon (called simply the Moontower by citizens), a center of worship to Selûne. A fourth temple, the Tower of Gold, venerated Waukeen until the Time of Troubles, but now stands empty and looted.

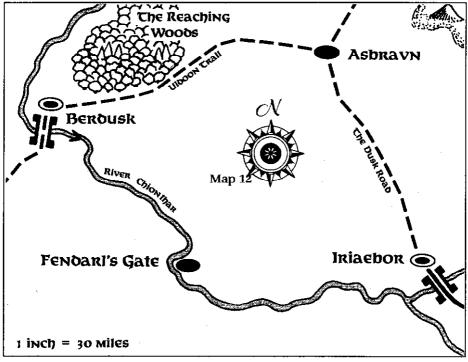
Priests of Lliira have petitioned the city for permission to found a temple within the walls of the former Tower of Gold, but many powerful merchants covet the site, which commands the road south across the bridge and out of the city. The matter is presently before the council, halted by wrangling that promises to go on for years.

As I mentioned, the shops of Iriaebor change with bewildering rapidity. Two deserve mention for their unusual wares: Give Me Wings to Fly, which deals in aerial mounts of various sorts, and the Well-Dressed Wizard, where mages can buy the latest, greatest cloaks, robes, hats, and staves.

Like the city's shops, its inns and taverns change with each passing month. This is especially true for taverns, as one needs no special tavern license to run one. The city taxes are paid on the original purchase of beer and spirits. The council doesn't care who sells the alcoholic drink to thirsty throats after that.

The few fixtures among inns are all in the old city atop the ridge (or Tor, as locals call the ridge): the Wandering Wyvern, a homelike place that welcomes a regular clientele and doesn't turn away adventurers; the Black Boar, a luxurious but poorly run place that relies on its exalted reputation; and the Sign of the Dreaming Dragon, a three-story inn with its own walled garden that is run by halflings. The Dreaming Dragon is rumored to have been home to a powerful adventurers' band in the past. Many adventurers don't like the expense or the tense atmosphere of the city, and stay an hour's ride north of the city at the Old Talking Ox on the Dusk Road.





# Places of Interest in Iriaebor

# Temples

#### Silent Hall

Perched in splendid isolation at the eastern end of the ridge on which the Old City stands, this walled citadel to Eldath takes the shape of a hollow hexagon with a side wing. It encloses a nicely maturing wooded grove dedicated to the goddess. The entry hall of the temple is a moss-and-fern bower built around a pool.

Peacewoman Luaqqa Absalrassin (Bran's successor) deliberately keeps the clergy few in number and the temple a serene retreat for solitary worship. Visitors are welcome, and

given a place to rest, but are then left entirely to themselves.

#### The Golden Bowl of the Goddess

The Garden Temple of Iriaebor stands atop the highest point of the Tor, overtopped only by the taller spires of the High Tower of Iriaebor (Bran's abode and home of the council). Here almost 50 priests are based. They spend much of their time out in the surrounding farms, working the farms of the faithful. High Worshipmistress Nalva Imthree, a tiny woman dedicated to growing things, has turned her back on the world almost entirely. All she does for folk in the city is give out flowers in the depths of winter—blooms grown



despite the winter storms in the unroofed, magically heated uppermost floor of the temple.

### The High Altar of the Moon

Just east of the High Tower of Iriaebor stands the round Moontower, a silver-and-black structure where High Moonmaiden Astyaril Hulemene leads faithful in eerie moonlit rituals. A friend to Harpers, Astyaril adds the only touch of romance and mystery to the lives of most Iriaebens. For that reason alone, services here are always attended.

# Shops Give Me Wings to Fly

Flying Mounts



This shop stands at the westernmost end of the Tor, and looks like a tiny keep bristling with domes of metal mesh. The domes are actually pens keeping the various aerial mounts for sale in the shop. Run by a mysterious group of wizards that is thought by some to be a semiretired adventuring band, this shop typically has-chained and well separated to keep them from fighting—a pair of griffons, four hippogriffs, a Pegasus, and perhaps an aerial steed or more exotic beast or two for sale at any given time. Be prepared to spend 35,000 gp and up. Hard bargainers can get mounts for as little as 20,000 gp in winter, when feed costs are high. This shop carries very powerful wards.

#### The Well-Dressed Wizard

Splendid Mage Robes and Staves



This shop stands just east of the Moontower—a tall, crumbling, oncegrand old house that gives no hint of what's within except for the floating, glowing illusion of a wizard's staff and cloak that hovers endlessly above the double entry doors. Inside is a blackcarpeted, mightily warded (against meteor swarms, I'm told!14) and exclusive shop where discerning mages with thousands of gold pieces to waste can buy grandly styled cloaks, robes, soft boots or long, pointed shoes, hats of all descriptions, and knobbed, gem-adorned, carved staves of fantastic appearance but no magical powers at all. Some visiting nobles come here to buy clothes grander than they can get anywhere else.

Tailoring is done while you wait. It typically costs 1,000 gp on top of the price of the garment, but runs a mere 900 gp for hats and pairs of shoes to over 40,000 gp for the largest, gaudiest staves.

Be warned that the proprietor seems to be a powerful mage himself, <sup>15</sup> and he's assisted by some unseen but quite strong flying creatures. Some garments (the "used ones," as the proprietor puts it delicately) may bear enchantments, but most await your own spells. They are of the finest handiwork, with doubled and even trebled seams. You can buy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Elminster said merely, "Tis the truth."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Elminster said: "He's a lich, actually. The flying help? Don't ask."





here quite confident that you'll be the only one in your town to have such fine magisterial mage robes—at least, until the nearest thief sees you.

#### lnns

The Black Boar



This large, twin-towered inn stands southwest of the High Tower where the road up from the Docks splits into two roads to encircle the Tower. It's a location many haughty merchants would kill for—and several have tried.

As a result, the owner, who keeps his name from the general public, spends all his time in plotting and dealing. His inn is furnished in exquisite luxury, but both the rooms and the meals are tiny, and the service is slow because the inn is understaffed. Thanks to snobbery, however, the Boar is full by the time every night falls.

The Sign of the Dreaming Dragon

This delightful inn has its own walled garden, a high-ceilinged taproom with balconies, and great food. It's run by the halfling couple Jolle and Estel, and it is one of Iriaebor's hidden treasures. Estel is a healing priestess of Eldath and retired adventuress, and was once a member of the Fellowship of the Dreaming Dragon. The establishment is very highly recommended.



# The OLD Talking Ox Inn/Tavern

!! YYY DDDD

In the days when merchant-hired armies clashed openly in the streets of Iriaebor night and day and armed people were attacked by anyone who didn't know them as an ally, adventurers felt hardly welcome in the City of a Thousand Spires. Many chose to keep their weapons, which had to be surrendered at the city gates—often to be returned only upon payment of stiff bribes—and sleep outside the city walls at a small wood lot and spring known as Northing.

Predictably, a greedy merchant cut down the trees and put up a rickety inn on the spot so as to charge these escaped customers. Outraged arriving warriors slew him—and one of them, an old, grotesquely fat mercenary captain, Olliber of Athkatla, known as the Old Ox to his followers, announced his intention to retire and run the inn as a welcome haven for veteran fighters.

This met with general approval, and a surprising number of his company retired with him. Under their care, the inn was rebuilt into a rustic, but complete, stable and inn complex. Two axe-wielding half-orc sisters from the mountains north of Sundabar took over the kitchens—and disgruntled diners learned not to complain unless they were good at dodging hurled axes! A visiting sorceress took pity on the two and taught them some tricks of seasoning. On her next trip, she showed them how to make some

sauces, and so on. The three became firm friends, and the quality of the inn's fare became known to mercenaries and traveling merchants throughout the Coast lands. The sorceress, Helmeera of Secomber, disappeared some years ago, and the half-orc sisters went looking for her—but the grizzled old servers (fighters who'd lost hands, arms, eyes, and the like during their fighting careers) had learned enough through watching and tasting by then to take over.

Olliber died some years back. The inn is now run by a council of 12 warriors, half of whom run it (hiring another dozen helphands) and half of whom are absent sponsors. It has become a favorite stop for travelers of all sorts on the road to Iriaebor. Some folk even go to the city to do business and then leave each night to sleep here.

### The Place

Newly planted trees encircle a fenced horse paddock and barnlike stables located west off the Dusk Road about an hour's ride north of Iriaebor's Lower City Gate. In front of the stables is a muddy saddling yard and in front of that, facing the road, a long, zigzag two-story log building with a central taproom and rows of guest rooms. The taproom's door is the one with the lantern over it. The kitchen is behind the taproom—and both places are usually roaring with noise and activity at all hours.

Guest rooms are simple but warm thanks to canopies around the beds, thick tapestries, and stone tables in each room on which bricks heated by the huge hearth are placed. The guest



rooms have doors that bolt and can be barred securely.

# The Prospect

The Old Talking Ox is a rough, rowdy place where warriors roar out oaths, jests, and songs as they merrily play pranks and tell tales on each other. It's their safehold to relax in. No steel is to be drawn inside the walls upon pain of being barred from the inn forever, or, if your victim has friends present, upon pain of swift death after they've hurled you out into the mud outside.

Guests who need a good sleep often leave their rooms in despair to seek the stable hayloft when the partying ranges up and down the corridors on running, heavy-booted feet. The staff members are vigilant night and day to prevent robbery and violence.

# The Provender

The food is simple but marvelous all the fat-fried, filling dishes warriors like but so often can't get, smothered



in sauces and gravies. Berry jellies and jams are on every table, along with hardbiscuits and dark molasses nutbread. You won't leave thinner.

## The Prices

Rooms are 8 gp per night. A room sleeps two, with no extra cots available. You don't have to share unless you want to. This price includes all stabling, food, and drink—though only simple ales, wines, and zzar are available. "Nothing too good passes our gullets," as one regular patron put it.

# Travelers' Lore

The man for whom the Old Ox is named is buried out back among the trees. It's said that his voice can be heard coming up from under the stone on certain moonless nights, confessing all his sins—and telling those who ask where all his treasure is hidden. One half-elven woman is said to have tirelessly followed up on Olliber's instructions and returned home very rich.

One not-yet-found treasure is said to be hidden in the inn: a finger ring that contains a captive faerie dragon. It can only be freed if it is "slain" six times in service to a wearer of the ring. Three lives have been spent already, so it is eager to die serving someone in a tight spot The ring emits a body animated by its spirit, not the dragon itself-its true body, the tale goes, is the ring. The council has requested that guests stop tearing the inn apart trying to find the ring, which eludes magic-detecting spells. They'd also like all readers to know it's not inside the helmed horror that guards the wine cellar!



# The Wandering Wyvern

Inn/Tavern

# 

This inexpensive home away from home is beloved by its many regulars. It stands four doors down from the haughty and expensive Black Boar, and like that high-class inn, it is full by the time most nights fall. However, the Wyvern looks like an old tumble-down house—and has been joined to three others, so it's now more than twice as large as the more exclusive Boar.

The two inns could not be more different. Unlike the luxurious decor and pomp of the Boar, the Wyvern is shabby and comfortable, furnished

with mismatched furniture, and adorned with assorted paintings and knickknacks (some might well use the term "junk") donated by guests. The kitchens turn out good, home-cooked food (lots of stews, soups, and onionand-egg omelets)-and guests help themselves. Most wander about the inn while dining, stopping at window seats or in the lounge or taking the food to their rooms. All drinks are served at the bar by the proprietor, Shalangul Adept (2 sp per talltankard for ale and 1 sp per large goblet for wine). Shalangul would like readers to know that he's not any sort of adept. It's just his name.

This is one of the few inns in Iriaebor that welcomes adventurers and travelers without questions, suspicion, sneering behavior, and





increased pricing. As a result, valueloving merchants, pilgrims, wandering folk, and adventurers both young and bold and old and retired gladly come here. Some of these graybeards are skilled warriors indeed, and their presence keeps thefts and rowdiness to a minimum.

# The Place

Wood-paneled, dimly lit, and crowded with randomly laid old, stained rugs, the Wyvern looks like a down-at-heel home. No two rooms share matching furniture. To keep chances of fire to a minimum, no smoking is allowed, and the place is lit (badly) by a score of wandering *driftglobes*.

# The Prospect

This inn is the best place to relax I've yet found as a traveler, because you can treat it like your own home. The easygoing atmosphere makes it possible to keep to yourself or to sit and talk for hours, so it's a great place to



hear tales of adventure without an inebriated storyteller or drunken hecklers. Many young adventurers come here deliberately to get tips or leads to unfound treasures from elder colleagues.

# The Provender

The few but cheerful staff members of the Wyvern spend most of their time baking bread, growing mushrooms in the cellar, and cooking. They make nicely spiced soups and stews, adequate roasts, nice leek-flavored and chive-flavored biscuits in a melted cheese batter, and oniondominated omelets in which leftover meat scraps always appear. Some guests hack at the roast meat when it's still red-raw, so those who like things well done are apt to find themselves with what butchers call chop scraps. Meals are serve-yourself informal-but can be had at any time.

# The Prices

Rooms cost a flat 5 gp a head per night, all meals included, along with stabling, if needed. As I said, drinks are extra.

# Travelers' Lore

The Wyvern has its share of hidden treasure tales. Coffers of black pearls and brass buckets full of gems were found above false ceilings in closets off the pantry, and one hall has a secret passage branching off it that leads down into a disused Beast Cult temple. Monster skeletons still shamble about in its dusty depths, but inn guests think they've found all the treasure.



Appendix 1:

# Folk of The Sword Coast



ith Elminster's aid, we present a best-guesses list of probable classes, levels, and alignments of some folk Volo mentions

in this guide. Adventurers be warned: Much herein may be wrong!

This list is alphabetical by first name because many folk in Faerûn lack surnames. Dukes, nobles, powerful mages, and other folk not likely to be met by the average traveler aren't here—unless they are a special threat or are of great daily importance to the side of a community a visitor sees. Only ability scores of 16 or greater are listed, and standard character statistic abbreviations for the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting are used.

HONORED MOTHER ALLIYA MACANESTER (LG half-f P12 of Sheela Peryroyl; INT 17, Wis 20, CHA 16). Matriarch of the temple of Sheela in Corm Orp, Alliya is revered by halflings and widely respected by others in the Sunset Vale. She knows the local weather and ways of nature better than almost any other living thing and can tell exactly where, when, and how to plant or nurture for best results. Her touch is said to give life to withered plants, and she's rumored to be able to tell by looking at it if a seed will germinate.

A wise, diligent leader of the farmers of Corm Orp as well as the local halflings and her temple, she is the true ruler of Corm Orp. Its human lord obeys her in all things. Alliya is a fierce foe of the Zhentarim and will even deal with poisons, adventurers, and other violent things not in keeping with nature in order to eradicate the threat from Darkhold, which she calls the Devouring Shadow.

HIGH SCRIVENER ALTHUNE DEMBRAR, Loyal Eye of Deneir (NG hf P14 of Deneir; INT 17, Wis 18, CHA 17). This elderly, dignified lady is still serenely beautiful despite her many years. She is a renowned expert on symbols of all sorts, widely consulted by those who need to identify runes or writings in old, forgotten tongues. She runs the Inner Chamber temple in Berdusk and is a firm ally of the Harpers, who often act as her eyes and hands outside Twilight Hall (which she never leaves), reporting on or bringing back runes or other symbols seen all across Faerûn.

Althune often has an owl perched on her shoulder. She loves to dance, and appears at most Harper revels in the Hall.

"LADY" ALYTH ELENDARA (CG hef R7; INT 17, Wis 17, Cha 16). Lady Alyth is graceful and courtly. Most folk think she is nobility of some sort. She owns and operates the Elfsong Tavern in Baldur's Gate, where she makes a widely praised stew and keeps a bank for sailors who patronize her tavern. No one knows just where the moneys are hidden. She is able to call on sorcerous aid in a hurry, and most patrons of the Elfsong, who go armed, will leap to aid or defend her.

AMAERASZANTHA (N amethyst she-dragon of great wyrm age). This wise, reclusive dragon may be the eldest of her race in Faerûn. She is spends much of her time swimming or bask-



ing in a stagnant lake at the heart of ruined Haumoritas, an ancient human city now known as Tempus' Tears.

If she is in the water when groups of intruders approach, Amaeraszantha often remains motionless, playing dead. If she has time to do so unobserved, she rolls over on her back and extends her claws in crooked, stiff immobility to enhance the image.

If a situation calls for it, she often shapechanges into a beautiful human female and dons a set of manacles she has magically arranged and altered so that she appears to be set out as a sacrifice "for the terrible dragon that lairs near here," she will sobbingly explain. She can free herself instantly, however. In this way, she often learns a lot about the true natures and intent of intruders before any hostilities begin.

Amaeraszantha has little use for treasure except gems, which she devours. She is wary and experienced in battle, and her purple scales have darkened almost to black. She is



Amelior Amanitas

sometimes mistaken for a black dragon. Acquiring knowledge and finding amusement in the thoughts, words, and deeds of the little creatures of Faerûn are her pursuit and her delight. She will defend the dwarves and gnomes who dwell in the ruins around her, and the ruins themselves, fearlessly if need be. She will never hesitate to join battle if it seems best.

The Great Wyrm of the Tears, as a bard bent on flattery once called her (she regards him—Mintiper Moonsilver, the Lonely Harpist—fondly), sees the fish in her lake as a precious food resource, to be harvested only sparingly. She also regards them as hers alone, and she will drive off, slay, or devour people who fish in her lake and don't cease the moment she confronts them.

When she's hungry, Amaeraszantha waits for dark and then flies west to the Sword Coast to plunge into the waves and feed. In cold winter months, she'll turn south and fly to the Shining Sea or wherever the water's warm enough to her liking before diving down to plunge, jaws wide, through a school of fish—or even pluck a single whale out of the water to devour aloft.

Beings who would slay, entrap, or rob dragons irritate her. She delights in slaughtering Dragon Cultists whenever they find her. Amaeraszantha values the Harpers and the Zhentarim alike as sources of amusement for her. Over the years, she has befriended some of the more conservative and kindly of the powerful spellcasters of Faerûn, such as Alustriel of Silverymoon, the Simbul, and the Witches of Rashemen. She has a soft spot for loners like herself, but despises the arrogance of many spellcasters, deeming them willful children not fit to so misuse such power.

AMELIOR AMANITAS (CG hm W17; INT 17, CHA 16). The Sage of Secomber is a wandering master alchemist and busybody. Tall, chunky, gray-bearded and bespectacled, Amelior is a bumbling, notoriously absent-minded eccentric. He has only one good eye and wears a variety of handsome patches over the socket of the other—some silk, some tasseled, some vividly patterned, and one bearing his sigil. He



dresses as a common craftsperson and is a wencher and a poker-about-after-secrets. These character traits have made him unwelcome in many places, though not in Silverymoon, where he's become a close friend of High Lady Alustriel.

Amelior is straight in his dealings—though he may actually forget he's hired someone— and rarely fights with spells, relying on his irritable, sharp-tongued bodyguard Erek and the contents of the two flasks he always carries. Erek is a lawful neutral 4th-level fighter of mixed northern blood and sharp, ready swords.

Amelior wears bracers of defense AC 3, and carries a gold flask and a copper one. When the gold one is opened, a nonnoble djinni named Hasan, utterly loyal to Amelior, emerges. Opening the copper flask lets out two ogres fanatically devoted to the sage. If slain, they rise as monster zombies to fight on. Amelior also owns several magical robes, a enchanted staff or two, and a large collection of potions.

He dwells in a cavelike home that is rather like an extremely cluttered halfling delve-home. It is connected to a tiny, leaning stone tower and is located high up amid gardens on one of the hills in Secomber. His residence is home to several golems and a dozen brightly colored (red, green, fuchsia, flame orange, mint blue, sun yellow, and so on) cats. Amelior constantly hires adventurers to carry out odd tasks for him, sometimes overpaying them absent-mindedly.

ABJECT SUPPLICANT ASGAR TELLENDAR (N hm P5 of Ilmater; Wis 17). Chief priest of the House of the Suffering God, the temple to Ilmater in the town of Asbravn, Asgar is a devout servant of the God on the Rack, but realizes his temple is in danger of closing for lack of local support—if the Zhentarim don't sweep over the town with spell and sword first, slaying all before them. Asgar has called on the Harpers of Berdusk to keep Asbravn free of Zhentarim agents and—he hates even to ask this—keep his own clergy pure. He called on them very reluctantly for he has always seen the Harpers as dangerous meddlers.

Asgar has always relied on visions sent to him in dreams by Ilmater, but the Zhents seem to know this and to be meddling magically with what he "sees." This defilement of his mind and the gods work has made the normally serene Asgar so angry he'd take up arms against any Zhentarim who offered him violence. As it is, he's entrusted the Harpers with his secrets, and he will heal or otherwise aid any Harper who comes to him in need.

AUNDEGUL SHAWN (LN hm F5; Wis 16). Proprietor of the Blade and Stars inn in Baldur's Gate, Aundegul is a close-mouthed, unassuming man whose one delight is making ruby cordial. A retired adventurer, Aundegul knows of many shady deals and doings, but seldom speaks. He abandoned his career as an adventurer in terror after seeing the results of a magical duel between two wizards who were master shapechangers—a duel that cost him most of his comrades. He has admitted a yuanti is imprisoned in the inn, and that his establishment also holds other, darker secrets.

BARIM STAGWINTER (NG hm F7; STR 17, DEX 17, CON 16, INT 16, CHA 16). This respected adventurer uses Boareskyr Bridge as his base of operations, and his word is recognized there as law. Involved in several adventuring companies over the years, he's currently sponsoring several small bands of younger adventurers, directing them (separately) toward destroying or driving out the serpentfolk of the Serpent Hills.

Barim is a good friend of Theskul Mirroreye. Together, they keep Boareskyr Bridge safe for the law-abiding during the summer and battle back trolls, brigands, wolves, and worse during the long, hard winters. Theskul wants to establish a fortified abbey to Tyr at the Bridge. Barim is prepared to support him in this if the abbey will support him in becoming Baron of Boareskyr and raising a castle, so that a walled city can be built between castle and abbey to enclose the clutter of tents and wagons that is present-day Boareskyr Bridge. The main impediment to this grand plan is the poisoned Winding Water. The two friends are working on this.



Barim is known to own magical weapons and armor, but just what powers his gear has, he keeps mysterious.

Belkin Orgul (LN hm Fll; STR 16, Dex 16, Con 17, Wis 16). This fat, puffing old man is a shrewd judge of folk and a cynic who is always armed against attack, expecting the world to turn on him at any moment. He always wears a ring of the ram and a self-regenerating Netherese ring of spell storing containing the spells magic missile, ironguard, and chain lightning. He has silver-plated daggers hidden in his boots and a short sword of quickness at his belt.

Belkin owns and runs his own weapons shop in Hill's Edge, and has more than a few other enchanted weapons at hand when he's inside it. He's going bald, but wears what's left of his hair long, defiantly retaining the manners and pride of his warrior days.

**BENTLEY MIRRORSHADE** (CG gm W(I)10/T10; DEX 17, INT 17). This industrious gnome illu-



High Loremaster Bransuldyn Mirrortor

sionist abandoned life as an adventurer to run the Friendly Arm inn in a keep he and adventurer comrades seized and cleared of monsters some 20 seasons ago. A clever, pleasant, always alert, curly-haired innkeeper who has a habit of humming when deep in thought and of scratching his rather large nose when concerned, Bentley's always a step ahead of troublemakers and misfortune. A veteran traveling Coast merchant called him "a master anticipator." Aided by his wife Gellana, he has made the Arm a safe, friendly, clean, well-defended spot, a "must" stop for overland travelers.

There are persistent rumors that Bentley sponsors adventuring bands and is involved in half a dozen covert schemes or shady merchant cabals. He certainly never seems short of money. On several occasions he's unhesitatingly hired mercenaries to bolster his defenses in the dead of winter or hired wizards to teleport needed items from far-off cities in a hurry.

#### HIGH LOREMASTER BRANSULDYN MIRRORTOR

(N gm P9). This party-loving former adventurer is now master of the temple to Oghma in Berdusk. A gleeful master of disguises (of which he has a vast collection), Bransuldyn often goes out into the city or roams the Vale while disguised, gathering lore by listening. Some unkind folk have called what he does "shamelessly and energetically eavesdropping." He often uses several spells he's created that allow him to record what he hears and then transcribe from afar just what he wishes of the words into books laid out ready in his temple.

Even if this jolly priest falls prey to a Zhentarim agent tomorrow, his recording spells will win him lasting fame across Faerûn. There are persistent rumors that he's still involved in adventuring and has discovered several ways down into the Underdark, where he keeps a sizable hoard of gems and valuable metal items hidden in a trapped spot that regularly claims the lives of overinquisitive drow and illithids.

BULDATH ANDRYN (LN hm W15; DEX 17, INT 18, WIS 16). This taciturn mage dwells in Scornubel, protected by a guardian wraith that is bound to an item he wears somewhere on



his person. He has a pseudodragon as a companion and uses his spells to earn himself a living and to probe the minds of those who serve him, anticipating their wants and treacheries so that he wins the firm loyalty of most, and eliminates others. He casts spells for hire, typically at 1,000 gp per spell level, never leaving his abode to do so.

Buldath uses his trusted, discreet agents to sell preserved monster components all over the Coast lands. He buys the remains of beasts from adventurers to gain his raw materials. He seems interested in the rare, strange, and dangerous living things of Faerûn, but the rest of his aims remain mysterious.

CHANSRIN ALUAR (CG hf W9; DEX 17, INT 18, CHA 16). A quick, sharp-tongued sorceress who's always eager for adventure, Chansrin loves battle and often assists the watch in her home city of Scornubel, battling rogue mages and adventurers who've gotten out of hand. She's slim, short, flame-haired, and has very large, dark eyes. She likes to bite people when angry or excited, giggles often in delight, and is given to impulsive action—such as leaping out of windows into nearby trees, swinging dangerously from balconies, or charging barehanded into affrays of armed men. She wears some sort of teleportational magical item that can whisk her to safety, but having to use it makes her angry-she'll often snatch up some magical items and wade right back into whatever danger she just escaped.

Chansrin's a generous friend, but she is easily bored or distracted. She's always happiest when she's rushing off somewhere else, so long as the somewhere else is within Scornubel.

DARTHLEENE (CG hf W19; DEX 17, INT 18, WIS 18, CON 16; now an archlich). Proprietress of the Dawn of Any Day shop in Berdusk, Darthleene is an ally of the Harpers who aids adventurers by selling them magical odds and ends. She was an adventurer herself, long ago, and still mourns the loss in battle of her true love, a handsome bard by the name of Tanalith Sorndarr. She likes to hear tales of daring and to see the vigor and sport of young folk.

Darthleene wears a robe of stars and a veil

to conceal her decaying skin, though she isn't as skeletal as most liches. She has the following powers: She can use spells as a 19th-level mage, including nine regenerating spells: chain lightning, delayed blast fireball, dispel magic, fly, identify, invisibility, teleport without error, tongues, and wall of force. These regenerating spells return without study 1 day after use. Like all archliches, Darthleene is immune to poison, disease, and all turning and disruption; all polymorph, energy draining, ability training, petrification, cold, electricity, enchantment/charm, insanity-related, death, and illusion magic; psionics; and spell-like natural powers. She can't be harmed by any physical attacks launched by beings of less than 6 Hit Dice or levels.

Darthleene has a *chill touch* that deals 1d10 points of damage plus causing paralysis lasting 1d4+1 turns to all touched victims who fail to save vs. paralyzation. She can also exude an *aura of power* at will that forces all beings of less than 5th level or 5 Hit Dice to flee in terror for 4d4 rounds. She can *repel undead* and *animate dead* by touch and will, and seems to never forget anything—shoppers are often startled when she addresses them by name or continues a conversation begun with them at their last visit to the shop, years earlier.

Darthleene suffers 1 hp of damage per level of the caster whenever she's struck by raise dead or similar healing spells. She can employ any of the magical items in the shop to aid herself in battle, triggering them by will from a distance. They include a concealed wand of magic missiles and a hidden staff of power.

DAURAVYN REDBEARD (LG hm F5; STR 16, INT 16, WIS 16). A stout, middle-aged former adventurer, Dauravyn is now the keeper of the Way Inn. He is proud of his establishment and of the vigilance and training of his hired troops. He is a friend and ally of the Lords of Waterdeep, and possesses some form of instantaneous magical communication with Lord Piergeiron, whom he can call on for swift aid if evil forces show up from Dragonspear Castle or the High Moor.

Dauravyn wears bracers of defense AC 2 and wields a two-handed broad sword +2 said





Dauravyn Redbeard

to have some special magical properties, including conferring infravision on the wearer and some sort of flying or teleportational ability. Dauravyn also wears a vampiric ring of regeneration attuned to him. No matter who wears it, he receives hit points equal to the damage it does. This was a gift to him by Velaethaunyl Shaethe, a grateful elven sorceress of the Misty Forest whom Dauravyn rescued—and, some say, loves deeply.

The innkeeper is a pleasant man, a shrewd judge of folk, and a discreet keeper of many secrets. There is a rumor that he's involved in some great, lifelong plan to recover the Unicorn Blade for or with Velaethaunyl. It's an ancient and very powerful elven artifact and could become the rallying point for a new elven realm centered on the Misty Forest, if Velaethaunyl's dreams come to pass.

**DELFEN "YELLOWKNIFF" ONDABARL** (CN hm W8; INT 18, CHA 16). An affable mage who is bearded, short, and increasingly stout, Delfen is an ex-

adventurer and onetime resident of Iriaebor retired to Daggerford to pursue a life of tutoring would-be mages. He is that rare thing: a willing, patient, unambitious teacher of magic who's always taking on new apprentices and is easy about payment. (If times get tough, he can always cast a spell or two for hire.) As such, he is important in the Coast lands, and word of him has spread from far Icewind Dale to the northern border towns of Calimshan.

Delfen is well liked by his apprentices and former students. They tend to think of him as more powerful than he really is because, wisely, Delfen doesn't reveal much of his powers or past. He is known to possess an extensive library of spellbooks, a dagger +2, a staff of power, a ring of regeneration, a ring of spell turning, bracers of defense AC 4, and a wand of fear. Many of the spellbooks were purchased from passing adventurers. He has devised some sort of spell that alerts his apprentices and the soldiers of Daggerford Castle if he is wounded or one of his magical items is taken from his person by force.

Delfen enjoys a life of training and ease. He's not at all interested in the dangers of resuming an adventuring career. He does love to listen to tales of the exploits of others, and will take from them hints about treasures not yet plundered to dispense as sage advice to others.

DERVAL IRONEATER (LN dm F6; CON 18, WIS 16). Highly regarded in Daggerford as a smith of high skill and a guildmaster, Derval Ironeater heads a large family smithing business, and his position on the Daggerford Council has earned him the affectionate nickname "Short Mask." Part of the Ironeater clan is interested in reviving the subterranean dwarven hold of Illefarn, which lies beneath a crag north of the Laughing Hollow. To fund their continuing efforts, the Ironeater forges turn out an endless stream of high-quality hooks, clasps, hasps, hinges, buckles, shields, gauntlets, spikes, and tools. Derval is the close-mouthed, levelheaded and tireless forge-hammer of the Ironeater clan. He did some adventuring in his youth, and owns a suit of plate mail +1, a battle axe +3, a hammer +3, dwarven thrower, and a ring of telekinesis. He can probably get his



hands on many more items of practical magic if necessary.

HIGH DARK PRIESTESS EMANA GORTHO (NE hf P6 of Cyric; Wis 17, Cha 16). The coldly beautiful leader of the Fist of the Future temple in Hill's Edge, Emana is a careful plotter who seeks to turn her city into a stronghold of evil. She's building an army of rogues, fanatical worshipers of Cyric, and street thugs to this end, but is careful not to overextend herself with so many Harpers about and the rival local clergy of Lliira set against her.

The citizens call her the Black Lady for the color of her robes—and, they say, her heart—and fear her. This fear is rightfully placed because her increasingly wild spell rituals now involve dark sacrifices. She is consumed by the desire to attract the notice and favor of Cyric, perhaps one day becoming his consort, and is eager to acquire new and more powerful spells to bring this about. The nearby Netherese ruins may hold what she seeks, so she tries to rob, capture, or slay all who return from exploring them.

FELOGYR SONSHAL (CN hm F6; STR 16, INT 16, CHA 16). The jovial, burly owner of Felogyr's Fireworks is everyone's friend. Behind the rollicking facade of constant jokes and roaring gusts of laughter is a shrewd businessperson who's been slowly shifting his trade from candles and lanterns to smoke powder and the like, as firearms and other glories of Gond become more common in Faerûn.

A trusted reseller for the realm of Lantan, Felogyr is the quiet source of many of the firearms available up and down the Sword Coast, and as such has grown very rich. His famous shop is located on Bindle Street in Baldur's Gate. There one can buy three-hour torches whose flames will be of a certain hue (6 sp each), slowfuses (5 gp each; you cut them to the desired time), flares (10 gp each), signal beacon pots (20 gp each), enchanted festival fireworks that produce spectacular displays of aerial light (25 gp to 75 gp), and smoke powder (45 gp and upward, depending on supply and demand, per charge).

Felogyr is prudent. He wants to avoid any large-scale strife that involves firearms and

possible retaliation from mages or others angry at his making such things available. He carefully controls his stocks of arms, and if word reaches him of thieves' guilds or merchant families (particularly the less scrupulous Calishite concerns) amassing large amounts by using go-betweens posing as separate interests, smoke powder and additional weapons simply become unavailable to that group for a time.

Felogyr uses his wealth to buy up property in Baldur's Gate and in other ports along the Sword Coast. He also lends money, both to shipbuilders and to adventurers, thieves' guilds, and other shady or risky interests, using his control of firearms to curb the illicit deeds of these debtors.

FULBAR HARDCHEESE (CN half-m T11; DEX 18, CON 18). Tavernmaster of the Happy Cow in Daggerford, Fulbar is an ex-adventurer who seems to want to forget his adventuring career. The owner of *rings of chameleon power* and *feather falling*, Fulbar also cherishes his magical blade, Quietstrike, a *short sword* +3 of neutral alignment, Intelligence 13, and Ego 15, and the abilities of detecting shifting walls and rooms and detecting secret doors.

One of the reasons Fulbar wants to keep so quiet about his deeds of daring is to avoid Zhentarim and Cult of the Dragon attention: He has most of a dragon's hoard that he gained somewhere in the Backlands of the Sword Coast buried deep under his tavern, and so he never runs short of funds. When he needs some cash, he simply goes and digs up some. In this way, he's been able to keep the Cow cheap and cheerful and to buy out most of the poorer farmers, letting them work their former land as tenants. His son Dickon runs Fulbar's own prosperous dairy farm, which produces a lot of good cheese.

Fulbar is also becoming a landlord of considerable holdings in both Neverwinter and Baldur's Gate, though he's at some pains to keep this as quiet as possible. He's always good for a loan to his friends, and so can call on a lot of stalwart farmers and folk of Daggerford for swift aid if need be. Fulbar sees himself as a quiet power in the Coast lands, working behind the scenes. He would be shocked to





Gellana Mirrorshade

learn just how close a watch the Lords' Alliance, the Harpers, and, more recently, the Zhentarim, keep on him.

GELLANA MIRRORSHADE (NG gf P10; WIS 18). This quiet, observant priestess of Garl Glittergold runs the Temple of Wisdom in the walled inn community known as the Friendly Arm and helps her husband Bentley run the inn as a safe, secure place. Where Bentley is an expert at sniffing out the schemes of living folk and seeing ahead what they'll need, try, and want, Gellana takes a longer view and is always looking ahead at the larger picture. She ordered and oversaw the digging of deeper wells for the inn's water supply and the rigging of secondary pumps in case the main ones fail or are wrecked by orcs. She also planned, and continually expands, the inn gardens, adding windowboxes and rooftop beds to the ground plots, and making all garden locations produce food or herbs for the inn kitchens.

Gellana welcomes humans to her worship

services, and has made not a few converts. She has also become something of a folk hero among gnomes in western Faerûn as "the quiet and true power behind a gnome who made it." Gnome mothers often speak of her to their daughters as someone they should emulate if they'd like to share as large a slice of success as Gellana's managed to carve out for herself.

GULDIN GALLOWGAR (NG hm F14; STR17, DEX 17, CON 17, WIS 16, CHA 16). Proprietor of the inn that bears his name in Elturel, this jovial, always-alert retired adventurer strides through life like some sort of patient and amused hawk, sponsoring adventurers and watching how they do. His advice as to where to find just about anyone or anything in the Realms is free. His sponsorship costs 10% of all treasure won, but allows adventurers potions of healing when necessary. Guldin eventually expects the value of the potion back in additional treasure.

Guldin is a very wealthy man, but almost everything is invested in Amn, Cormyr, the Sunset Vale, and various caravan companies that link the three areas. He also has a lot of magical items, but the only ones that have been definitely identified are those he always wears: a *ring* of *protection* +3, a *ring* of *spell* turning, and a pair of winged boots (speed 15, MC A).

HALBAZZER DRIN (LN hm W18; INT 18, Wis 18). Halbazzer is a balding, white-haired, gruff old man, now frail of health and stooped. He dwells in a modest, shuttered stone tower on Stormshore Street in Baldur's Gate, guarded by golems and ornamental wall displays of weapons that can animate to fight for him. The tower has a tiny shopfront that bears the sign-board *Sorcerous Sundries*. Inside you'll find a waiting room with a comfortable chair, a table, and a bell. It summons Halbazzer, who sells potions of healing and casts spells for fees—if he's in the mood.

Halbazzer is very rich, and he invests behind the scenes in many Baldurian ventures. His usefulness has led the ruling Grand Dukes to place a discreet watch over his premises to aid him against thieves and unscrupulous interests from Amn, Calimshan, and elsewhere



who want to divest him of the secrets that have made his fortune: the spells of Halbazzer's devising that banish mildew and moisture. He refuses to sell these spells as scrolls or tutor others in their casting.

Halbazzer is also an expert in the use of the *mending* spell and is a familiar fixer of household items in Baldur's Gate. He has been known, when attacked, to hurl a mean *meteor swarm*, too!

ITHTYL CALANTRYN (CN hf W12: DEX 17, CON 17, INT 18). One of three serving wenches at the Three Old Kegs inn in Baldur's Gate (all of whom were once huntresses in Tethyrl, Ithtyl is a sorceress skilled in the use of *levitation* spells and shielding-type spells. She's training her fellow servers, Katheera and Nathbaera, in magic, but as yet they are still bumbling apprentices.

Ithtyl is devoted to her employer, Nantrin Bellowglyn. She always has spells ready to defend herself, her employer, or the inn. She may also wear a *ring of the ram*— or has devised spells that duplicate its violent ramming action. She's calm and quick in a fight.

JANTHOOL (CN hm T11; STR 16, DEX 17, CON 16, INT 16, CHA 16). This dark-eyed, curly bearded merchant from Athkatla lives to make coins multiply-and is very good at it. He tirelessly travels Faerûn bartering goods, taking advantage of seasonal shortages to make huge profits whenever possible. Chance recently made Janthool very rich through found treasure in Soubar, but he's also steadily gained wealth over the years through shrewd bartering and careful, covert investments. He views Aurora's network of catalog stores as dangerous competition, and he tries to arrange orc and drunken brigand attacks on her outlets whenever possible. He once arranged a stampede of bulls through a Waterdeep outlet-and had to flee the city hastily when evidence was given against him.

Janthool is known to carry huge arsenals of hidden weapons and equipment, such as grapnels on long, coiled-wire lines, on his person. These weapons have allowed him to fight his way free of several nasty scrapes. He's cool and deadly in a fight, and wields a *short sword of quickness*. He's also known to wear a *ring of spell turning*.

JOYBRINGER JHANADRA CASELDOWN (CG hf P7 of Lliira; Dex 16, INT 17, WIS 18, CHA 16). High priestess of the Cry of Joy temple in Hill's Edge, the Joybringer is young and enthusiastic. She works with local Harpers to keep her city from falling under the sway of the Cyricists and the Zhentarim, and is known for her acrobatic dancing and high, clear singing voice.

Since joining the clergy, she hasn't used her first name, and few folk know it. Fewer still know the secret behind local rumors of her strange powers—she's a weredragon, able to assume the form and powers of a copper dragon when necessary Folk in Hills Edge call her the Rose-Red Lady, and most of them love her.

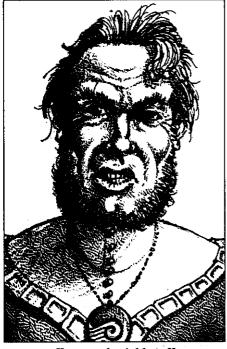
MOST RADIANT OF LATHANDER KELDDATH ORMLYR (NG hm P16; INT 16, WIS 18, CHA 16). Governor of Beregost and high priest of the temple to Lathander there, Kelddath is a patient, even energetic, supporter of local improvement. He's always advising or lending money to new local businesses and to farmers trying to expand or modernize their holdings.

His temple troops police the town attentively and try to prevent adventurers and others from exploring a local ruined castle. Any rowdiness or lawlessness is swiftly and harshly dealt with. Kelddath wants Beregost to have a reputation for being the safest Sword Coast town in order to encourage trade and travel,

Korbus Brightjewel (CN gm W(I)6; Dex 16, Con 16, Int 17). Court Jeweler to the Duke of Daggerford, Korbus prefers the relative peace of Daggerford to the bustle, crowding, and intrigue of Waterdeep, and he steadfastly refuses all inducements to relocate. Some Waterdhavian noble families have offered to sponsor him for life if they can have the exquisite creations of his skilled hands. He's especially fond of crafting detailed insects, birds, and lizards from gems, gold, and silver, particularly into pins that perch on the shoulder of a lady or hold her cloak together.

Korbus identifies and values jewelry for nominal fees (10 gp per piece). He will offer to purchase especially rare or fine pieces, and he has coins aplenty to do so. Korbus uses his *detect magic* ability to examine each piece for enchantments, and he fully and honestly





Krammoch Arkhstaff

reports what he finds. Most merchants who travel the Coast lands bring gems to him. They know his estimates are fair and precise. Korbus teaches the arts of the illusionist only to gnomes, and detests adventuring.

Korbus has treasure cached in many places and has substantial investments in Waterdeep and Elturel. He is known to possess a *ring of protection* +3, a *wand of metal and mineral detection*, and a *robe of scintillating colors*.

KRAMMOCH ARKHSTAFF (NE hm F3; Wis 16). This sage of Baldur's Gate is a retired adventurer generally acknowledged to be the Faerûrian authority on basilisks. By means of certain magical items won during his career, he's gained immunity to petrification, and is thereby able to observe basilisks at leisure—even breeding them and keeping them as pets. Until recently, he kept at least three at his abode in the city, but was ordered by the ruling Grand Dukes to remove them after one merchant too many was turned to stone.

One can still purchase basilisks from Krammoth, who keeps a dozen or more on a country estate near the city. The estate is staffed by blind servants and by a dozen loyal warriors equipped with the same protective magic as the sage himself. The basilisks sell for an average price of 2,500 gp each.

Krammoch is widely consulted by adventurers and by merchants conducting shady business. It is widely rumored that he has extensive pirate contacts. He also operates as a go-between for fences arranging meetings with clients. These are held in various places and at varying times to avoid the attention of authorities and vengeful victims.

LARLOCH (LE hm W26; undead ultra-lich; STR 18/72, INT 18, WIS 18, CON 18, CHA 16). The Shadow King of Warlock's Crypt is a powerful undead mage served by, among legions of lesser creatures, many vampires and liches. Many proud adventurers have tried to destroy Larloch-and all have failed, although many of them contributed skulls or their corpses to Larloch's decor or servant armies. His powers are mighty indeed and are vested in spells, an awesome arsenal of magical items, and his undead powers. He is said to be able to avoid destruction by sinking down into the floors of specially prepared areas of power, only to appear elsewhere, rejuvenated. These chambers are naturally where he spends much of his time.

Larloch also commands a potent arsenal of curses, some spells conferred by his touch, and others unleashed by intrusion into specific areas or trapped caskets and strongcupboards. These can forcibly change the appearance, intellect, and abilities of victims long after they escape from Warlock's Crypt.

Elminster warns that the true extent of Larloch's powers is not known. What the Old Mage does know of Larloch, expressed in game terms, is this: The Shadow King has at least the powers of a lich, but turns as "special." Larloch retains his sorcerous spellcasting abilities, and wields a huge arsenal of magical weapons and other magical items. Silver weapons cause his undead flesh to burn and seem to do him double damage. Wisps of smoke curl away from all



wounds caused by a silver-edged blade.

Larloch continues to develop new spells and other magic. He added a few wrinkles to his own achievement of undeath so that he possesses a natural spell of each level that need not be memorized and can be recast by him 24 hours (144 turns) after he casts it. Larloch's spells, in ascending level order, are magic missile (5 missiles per spell), web, dispel magic, wizard eye, animate dead, chain lightning, control undead, disrupt undead, and energy drain. Larloch also permanently gains hit points drained by energy drain.

Disrupt undead creates a beam up to 30 feet long, requiring an attack roll only if the target can hide behind obstacles. It harms only undead and has effects identical to a mace of disruption, except Larloch gains all points of damage dealt as hit points of his own. An undead blasted out of existence surrenders all its hit points to Larloch. Larloch can permanently increase his hit point total in this way.

Larloch's spells are cast by will alone, needing no verbal, somatic, or material components. All have a casting time of 2. Larloch is immune to one specific wizard spell of each level, but Elminster doesn't know which ones. Elminster warns adventurers that finding out is a game not worth the cost.

LONTHALIN MINTAR (CN hm W11; INT 17, WIS 16, CON 17). Lonthalin is one of several minor mages who work from stalls in the Wide (open market) of Baldur's Gate. He specializes in adornment spells that give clients temporary fantastic hairdos, tattoos, body scents, and hue changes and cause daring costumes to adhere. Good disguises cost as much as 100 gp or as little as 25 gp extra, depending on what is done.

MOST VIGILANT MAURANDYR (LN hm P16 of Helm; STR 16, DEX 16, CON 18, INT 17, WIS 18, CHA 16). This valorous battle-priest leads the House of the Guardian temple in Hluthvar, and more than any other being is responsible for holding back the spread of the Zhentarim in Sunset Vale from their ever-stronger base in Darkhold. Maurandyr is an impressive general and a formidable foe. He is known to employ many magical protective devices and weapons,

and to have the tenacity and stamina of a lion.

Recently, however, he has begun to fail under concerted magical attacks launched by Zhentarim mages and priests, spells that aim to drive out Maurandyr's psyche and take control of his body. The spells would make him act to let the Zhentarim into Hluthvar with a minimum of fighting, so that Hluthvar can be used as a fortified Zhentarim base down in the Vale.

Maurandyr has fought off these attacks thus far, but for how much longer? They so cloud his mind as to leave him unsure as to their true cause. Worried Harpers are unable to get aid to him—the Zhentarim have already subverted the minds of many of the priests around him. Only the aid Helm sends in his rituals—and the valor of hired adventurers, riding patrols around Hluthvar—have kept the Zhentarim from prevailing as yet.

MYRIN SILVERSPEAR (LN em F8; INT 17, WIS 18). This dour, silent moon elf is the efficient proprietor of the Halfway Inn, located outside the Gate Glen of Evereska. His steady silver eyes miss nothing, and he's as discreet as any accomplished courtier, handling disputes between proud elves as smoothly and as calmly as brawls between drunken humans. He has a knack for remembering faces and names, and has sometimes identified mercenaries or merchants from their drawn likenesses or when shown them in various vision spells.

Myrin never speaks of his adventuring past. Some suspect he is a Harper and others that he is a disgraced member of the ruling family of Evereska, or at least one of that realm's oldest, proudest noble families. Myrin smiles and says nothing. On more than one occasion he's revealed that he wears a *ring of spell turning* and a *ring of the ram*, presumably trophies of his adventuring days—but he won't say anything about them, either.

NANTRIN BELLOWGLYN (LN hm F8; STR 16, INT 16, WIS 16). Owner of the Three Old Kegs inn in Baldur's Gate, Nantrin is a tall, quiet man with long, curly black hair and a diagonal sword scar from his nose down across one cheek. A retired Tethyrian noble's guard, he's wary of folk from that land. Mindful—from experience—of the



troubles one can get into, he keeps his mouth closed when helping folk dispose of unwanted bodies and other little troubles.

NETHMOUN ALN (CN hm W12; DEX 17, CON 16, INT 18, WIS 16). This reclusive mage is soft of speech and looks a little odd. His head is very small, and his features are plain, but usually untidily bewhiskered as he tries to grow yet another beard. He dwells in a small, ramshackle hut on the eastern edge of Scornubel, surrounded by formidable guardian monsters and by the defensive spells of a complicated ward.

Nethmoun collects rare and unusual spells, trading for them magical training or magical items he's made. Some of the magical training is in learning spells from his own collection. The magical items are usually useful but low-powered things such as wands of magic missiles that also emit right upon command. He employs a strikingly beautiful cook, and often uses a projected image of her as an agent in his dealings.

OBRIMSUR THUNDERWOOD (LG hm R10; STR 17, Dex 17, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 16). Proprietor of the Thunderwood Forays outfitting shop in Berdusk, this Harper ally knows the southern Vale, particularly the Far Hills, as well as he does the corners of his own shop. He's probably the greatest living expert on the lay of the land there.

Once leader of the Stormriders adventuring band, Olbrimsur has led many expeditions against the Zhentarim and the monsters of the Sunset Mountains. Olbrimsur is the Stormriders' sole survivor. The rest of the members perished after they all got into a battle with a Red Wizard of Thay.

Olbrimsur now spends his time scouting and he sponsors others to do the fighting. There's a dark, persistent rumor in Berdusk that he knows of a buried city under the Far Hills that's crammed with treasure—and that he is trying to get others to do the fighting and dying necessary to carve a way into it, whereupon he'll use hidden magical items to defend himself against all foes as he goes in and takes all the treasure. Those who know him doubt that the rumormongers are correct about his ultimate intent.

PHIRAZ OF THE NATURALISTS (LN hm W6; INT 18, Wis 18). This sage dwells in Scornubel,

where he sometimes assists the watch with his spells. He is the reigning Faerûnian expert on otyughs, and he makes his field of study the fauna of the High Moor. Many adventurers consult him as to its monstrous inhabitants. A typical interview costs 25 gp; the fee is 50 gp if detailed tactics or locales are desired.

RAGEFAST (NG hm F1; INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 16). This sage of Baldur's Gate is a small, frail, bearded man of rakish appearance and ready laughter-and a widely respected expert on the history and genealogy of the Coast lands, and of humankind's mastery of magic. He makes his home in a tall, narrow, green-roofed house between the temple of Gond and the harbor, and is usually to be found there examining freshly purchased old books and records brought to him by merchants from all over Faerûn. His library is said to rival that of Candlekeep for magical lore-and to be better guarded, though the whispered tales of guardian spells and creatures are as contradictory as they are colorful.

RAMAZITH FLAMESINGER (CG hm F6; STR 16, INT 18, Wis 16). The lean, athletic, bearded Ramazith is dashingly handsome and a notorious ladies' man. A skilled dancer and swimmer, he has reached several deep-sunken wrecks without magical aid and can out-dive most humans alive.

He dwells in Baldur's Gate in a ramshackle house next to the Three Old Kegs inn, and he frequently wanders into the inn of evenings for a meal. Ramazith is a sage expert in marine life, particularly sea herbs and the habits of intelligent marine life such as ixitxachitl. Ramazith's advice is much in demand by the captains of large fishing fleets, who can learn from the sage just where fish of certain types are likely to be the most plentiful at any given time.

It is rumored that Ramazith has slain several angry husbands in self-defense over the years, and there are also rumors that he's a Harper or even an agent for the Red Wizards of Thay. He has been seen talking to elves newly arrived from Evermeet on more than one occasion, but he refuses to discuss such meetings.



LADY RHESSAJAN AMBERMANTLE (NG hf B14; DEX 16, CON 17, INT 17, Wis 18, CHA 16). Also known as the Old Vixen and, when she was a famous explorer and adventurer, Rhessajan of the Tents, Rhessajan is now the just, wary ruler of the Caravan City, Scornubel. A wrinkled old woman of rasping voice, sharp eyes, and gusty good humor, she still wears the boots, breeches, and tunic of her adventuring days, and is armed with a ring of regeneration, a ring of the ram, a scarab of protection, a scimitar of speed, and other, lesser-known magics.

Some say she's a Harper, others that she's secretly part of the Lords' Alliance—and still others, that she sponsors endless adventuring bands in the hopes they'll bring back multiple potions of longevity so she can regain her passionate, carefree youth. Rhessajan laughs at such ideas. She likes nothing more than a good joke, and her only bid for longer life is a sponsorship of a certain mage who's experimenting with the long-term effects of humans shapechanging into dragon form. Rhessajan is also well-known among the folk of Scornubel for her keen interest in all news of weredragons.

SHANDALAR (CN hm W25?). This eccentric mage dwells in a floating house just east of the hamlet of Ulgoth's Beard. This house is a rebuilt, moored Halruaan skyship. Most folk believe Shandalar hails from that southern land of mages—and are also sure that he's insane.

Shandalar is a mage of power who's always experimenting with new spells and new magical items. He's trained his three daughters, Delorna, Helshara, and Ithmeera, to be wizards of skill W11, W10, and W9, respectively). They see to the running of his household and sell the mushrooms produced in the caverns beneath the house in the Wide in nearby Baldur's Gate, daily.

Shandalar harnesses lightning from the many local storms to energize the strange magical devices he constructs—and has a permanent magical immunity to lightning. He often strolls about during lashing storms, laughing amid crackling lightning strikes.

Locals swear Shandalar's mushrooms are tended by mushroom people. He's also known to keep treasure hidden deep in his mush-



Shandalar

room caverns for pirates and outlaws who pay steep annual guarded storage fees. His past and his aims in life are a mystery. It seems he wants to left alone to pursue new achievements in magic.

MASTER FLETCHER SUMBARL ARDUSK (NG hm F10; specialization: crossbow). Proprietor of the Bent Bows shop in Hill's Edge, Ardusk is a bowyer/fletcher expert at finding and fixing deviations from true in shafts and bolts. He is a careful man who's always armed with a dagger and a hand crossbow that shoots sleep-envenomed darts. A fierce foe of the Zhentarim, he's proud of the fact that his darts and blade have claimed the lives of at least six Zhentarim magelings. He foresees the ruin of his city unless the Zhentarim are destroyed, and he will sponsor adventurers willing to strike against them.

TAEROM "THUNDERHAMMER" FUIRUIM (NG hm F1; STR 18/26, Wis 17, Con 18, 25 hp due to unnatural vitality). This master armorer has



his own smithy in Beregost and is a smith whose work is admired even by dwarves. Though he's grown white-haired with the passing of many years, he's still an active, burly giant of a man. He keeps to himself, working at his forge, but can slay orcs with a single blow of his 12-foot-long iron staff, which does 3d4 points of damage plus his Strength bonuses.

Taerom has often made items fine enough for wizards to enchant, but these days he's more apt to make small, useful things like hooks, locks, hinges, and coffers. He sports magnificent muttonchop whiskers and stands almost 7 feet tall, with shoulders almost 4 feet broad. He has a distinctive rolling stride.

Talessyr Tranth (CN hf W13; INT 18, WIS 16, Cha 16). This tall, courtly, mustachioed man is actually a woman wearing a semipermanent disguise. Only long-time Baldurians know the truth about her gender, as a result of her disguise slipping during several fierce magical duels. She runs a stall in the Wide (open market) in Baldur's Gate where she creates shortlived magical disguises, body adornments, costume alterations, or the like for clients who wish to impress at parties, hide their true likeness, or shock friends or social rivals.

Talessyr cares not if her work is used by thieves, and she delights in encouraging an air of mystery around herself by having clients made up to look like illithids or drow parade in and out of the private tent at the back of her stall. Her intricate disguises cost 50 to 200 gp, and she's apt to vanish whenever authorities grow angry with the uses to which they're put. There's a rumor she does business with mind flayers, when nights are dark—and may even serve a beholder master.

VIGILANT GODSEYE TATHLOSAR BRIMMERBOLD (LN hm F18; STR 18/69). A veteran war leader (known around the Vale as "Sleepless Teeth"), Tathlosar is a wary and always energetic guardian who believes that civilization only survives in Faerûn through the vigilance of those who take up arms to defend it. Leader of the Ready House of the Right Strong Hand in Berdusk, Tathlosar ensures that his temple is an academy of arms as well as a house of serene

worship. He is known for having detailed, complex, fivefold (or more!) contingency plans in any battle. His war captains are used to quickly responding to a sequence of code phrases that can send troops commanded by the Vigilant Godseye into intricate battlefield maneuvers. He regularly thrashes much larger forces out of Darkhold through this deft battlemastery, foresight, and the magical aid of the senior clergy of Helm. He seems to be able to sniff out treachery and the planned stratagems of foes at a mere glance across a battlefield.

He is a handsome, close-mouthed giant of a man who is almost always clad in a full suit of plate armor—although there are many scurrilous rumors that in younger days he doffed it often to dally with fair maids up and down the Vale. ("Creating more followers of Helm," as one warrior put it.) He no longer indulges in such antics (if he ever did), but young men who resemble him are still turning up at the gates of the House, eager to join the service of Helm and learn to swing a blade in the name of the god.

FIRST READER TETHTORIL (LG hm P18 of Mystra; STR 16, INT 18, WIS 18, Con 16, CHA 16). This tall, impressive, wise, and soft-spoken man is often mistaken for the Keeper of Tomes of Candlekeep. He is more intelligent, regal, and sensitive than his superior Ulraunt, by far—and Ulraunt knows it. Yet Tethtoril is unfailingly loyal, thoughtful, and diligent in his duties, often anticipating troubles and preparing beforehand to spare Candlekeep troubles—or Ulraunt any embarrassment.

Most Holy Mystra often whispers to Tethoril in his dreams, bidding him to do this or that—and in this way has led him to unearth key spells from forgotten tomes; kept Elminster, Khelben, and the Harpers welcomed or at least, tolerated in Candlekeep; and kept Ulraunt from being seduced by darker powers (most recently, Cyric). In this, Mystra is aided by both Deneir and Oghma.

Although he doesn't know it, Tethtoril is one of the safest people in all the Realms—three deities will protect him against any attack, manifesting as: whatever spell is needed (Mystra); a wall of force conjured by a shadowy floating harp (Oghma); or a suddenly appearing magical



symbol (effects identical to the wizard spell of the same name) of one of the known types that flashes and discharges in his defense immediately after it is seen (Deneir). All three deities subtly aid Tethtoril in puzzling out the meaning of cryptic, faded, fragmentary, or forgotten script writings. It is this superlative ability to decipher writings that has led to Tethtoril's present rank.

THALANTYR THE CONJURER (NG hm W17; INT 17, Wis 17). An archmage of note, Thalantyr is a courtly, solitary man who enjoys walks in the countryside while armed with his *staff of power*. He dwells in a griffon-guarded estate known as High Hedge, northwest of Beregost.

Once an adventurer who eagerly sought the lost magic of Netheril in crumbling ruins, he's retired from the perils of that profession, though he'll help other adventurers (though not his former adventuring companions) with advice and spells for fees. He'll also warn them that they may find a lot more than they intended to, as he did—but won't be much more specific.

One gathers from long conversations with him that he met some sort of horrible monster and was enslaved for a time, escaping only through luck. He is said to have won his freedom with spellbooks and other magical relics of Netheril that make him self-supporting, so that he need not travel the planes or go adventuring in Toril any longer.

THESKUL MIRROREYE, LONG LAWFUL ARM OF TYR (LG hm P6; STR 16, WIS 18, CHA 16). A warrior-priest of Tyr often seen riding about Boareskyr Bridge clad in armor of black and silver, Theskul is-with his trusted friend Barim Stagwinter, and their common ally Aluena Halacanter, a sorceress who dwells nearby-the voice of authority in the roughand-ready Bridge. He dreams of establishing a fortified abbey of Tyr at the crossing and hurling back the monsters and the lawless from the area forever. Ultimately, he dreams of a small farming realm centered on the Bridge, linked to the North and the Sunset Vale by strong fortresses at Dragonspear Castle, the Way Inn, Scornubel, and Triel.

Theskul is tall and splendid in appearance, his flowing hair prematurely white. A fearless

warrior and a shrewd judge of folk, he has little patience for those who try to twist rules and agreements to their own ends or try to set such aside—a source of constant friction between himself and the mage Aluena, whom he sees as lax and over-tolerant. (Aluena is not covered in this guide. She's seldom seen in the Bridge itself, keeping to her own lands.) He suspects she is a powerful Harper and follows aims that may differ from his own.

For Theskul, an ordered Faerûn is a strong Faerûn. "And by holy Tyr, it shall be ordered, town by town, farm by farm, until I'm too old to carry such work forward."

TORLETH MINDULSPEER (CG hm F1; INT 18, WIS 18). This tall, gaunt man has a dry wit and a perpetually gloomy manner. He runs Torleth's Treasures, a crammed shop of odds and ends in the roadside hamlet of Gillian's Hill, south of Daggerford. Torleth loves to buy old pieces of junk brought to him by passersby—and sell them to other passersby. Some folk swear you can get anything in his dim, dusty shop.

Others note that for all the variety to be found in the shop, Torleth can't make much on the spread between his buying and selling prices—and that he must live on coins collected in some other way. As a spy or supply or message drop for merchant costers, perhaps? Or for groups of darker intent, like the Zhentarim or the Red Wizards? Perhaps the Cult of the Dragon, or the Harpers? Or maybe he's just a smart investor in merchant shipping who can live off the proceeds of his investments. He does seem to know every traveling merchant of the Coast lands who's been in business longer than a winter.

Some dim cellar or corner of Torleth's shop is rumored to hide a magical *gate* offering instant travel to Waterdeep, or Suzail, or Mirabar, or Westgate — or perhaps all of those places. Rumors also tell that Torleth makes his gold by charging 100 gp per person for the *gate's* use.

TRASKAR SELARN LORD OF SECOMBER (CG hm R11; STR 16, DEX 16, INT 16, Wis 16, Con 16). This regal, handsome, tall, and good-natured man has agreed to watch over Secomber for the Lords' Alliance. He does this by keeping an



eye on — and descending swiftly upon when necessary—the lawless, but otherwise leaving the people to their own business.

Traskar has a large fortune, gained through adventuring, and he sponsors the garrison himself. His influence and personal popularity have helped to foster friendships among the various races who dwell in Secomber. He knows the High Moor well and often sends adventurers who come to him to areas he knows hold promising ruins that haven't been plundered bare yet.

CHANTMISTRESS ULUENE MAERTALAR (NG hf P16 of Milil). High priestess of Evensong Tower, temple to Milil in Berdusk, this diligent devotee of the Lord of Inspiration has risen fast in his service through hard work and boundless energy rather than through any brilliance of personal talents. The revels she organizes take full advantage of Berdusk's growing community of minstrels, centered on the Harper hold of Twilight Hall, to provide refined entertain-



Keeper of Tomes Ulraunt

ment for all cultured (that is, wealthy) folk, not just the faithful of Milil. By such means, Uluene has steadily built the membership and power of her temple.

She is a short, petite lady of dark hair, dark eyes, serene beauty—and a face that betrays only what she allows it to. She is a skilled actress and a superb singer, and is always armed with a full roster of battle spells. More than once her quick magic has broken up crises at her revels. She's known to be seeking a skilled bard as a husband and to be growing hungry for adventure rather than the comfortable but unchanging tenor of the temple precincts.

ULMYN ANDALOR (NG hm F4; STR 16, DEX 16). An affable, portly man with a curly white beard and a bald pate, Ulmyn Andalor is a miller in the roadside hamlet of Bowshot, north of the Way Inn. His sawmill is always busy. Ulmyn, who never seems to sleep, can be seen trotting about night and day, covered with sawdust, overseeing a large staff in turning out cheap, plentiful cut lumber for sale in Waterdeep and Daggerford.

A simple man who takes pleasure in efficiency, Ulmyn knows and can identify both common and exotic woods better than most carpenters. Rumor has it that he was once a guard for a noble family in Waterdeep and fled to Bowshot after an affair with the beautiful daughter whose bodyguard he was —an affair that produced a child now heir to the family fortunes. The rumor also impugns that Ulmyn was paid handsomely to go away and renounce all claim to a place in the family. This payment is said to have subsequently grown into a sizable fortune.

Some say Ulmyn is less simple than he appears, and has survived several assassination attempts sponsored by that noble family by a combination of anticipation, battle prowess, and hidden magical items always kept ready on his person. Other folk whisper that Ulmyn is only a human shape worn by a powerful, possibly evil, creature.

KEEPER OF TOMES ULRAUNT (LN hm W9; INT 18, WIS 18). The head of fortified Candlekeep, Ulraunt is a proud scholar, one of the most learned—and one of the most haughty—peo-



ple in all Faerûn. His sharp tongue, sharp nose, and dark-eyed, hawklike gaze have earned him the nickname "the Old Buzzard" among acolytes down the years—a term that has even crept into general use in the Coast lands.

Ulraunt has access to more spells than most wizards ever see in their lives, and he reportedly keeps in practice casting them in his private turret chamber and in caverns deep beneath Candlekeep. A secret passage is said to connect these heights and depths. He bears a magical staff of office rumored to be a *staff of the magi* with extra, extremely potent powers. Ulraunt and those among the Great Readers who are wizards also have access to spell scrolls all over Candlekeep—scrolls hidden behind wooden panels and within false tomes.

Ulraunt's chief interest is acquiring ever more information. His aims in life are unknown beyond making Candlekeep the seat of a land of scholars and a power on the political stage of Faerûn. Several tales link him with young ladies of various noble houses in Suzail, Waterdeep, and Tethyr in his earlier years—and there's a newer rumor tying him romantically with some of the icy-cold, haughty elven ladies who come to the Sword Coast (though rarely) from Evermeet.

YAJANDRA DLATHAERO (LN hf W17; DEX 17, INT 18, WIS 17, CHA 16). This petite, swarthy, grayeyed and iron-willed lady was born in Calimshan to a satrap and raised from birth to the duties and style of rule. Disinterested in intrigue, she showed an early aptitude for magic and solitary study, so her despairing father washed his hands of her, apprenticed her off to a local mage, and took another wife to set about fathering sons to be his heirs.

Yajandra was quite content to study quietly, avoiding the cut and thrust of Calishite politics and sorcerous rivalries. As soon as possible, she left that land, slipping away from her master Asheund on a spell-trading trip to Amn. Asheund was later slam by a wizard he was bartering with.

Yajandra disappeared for some years. Most folk think she spent the time seeking out good or lonely dragons and serving them while studying their ways and magic. She visited



Yajandra Dlathaero

Candlekeep once with money enough to fund her studies, and showed up later in Zazesspur to study with the sage Cthethros, considered in his time the greatest living authority on dragons. (He has since died.)

Yajandra was dwelling in Amn with a gold dragon who kept to human shape and used the name Sandro, when a Harper brought word to her of finding the Well of Dragons. Yajandra hastened to the remote village of Ladydove and bought the largest house there, warding it out of habit. That saved her life. Days later the Dire Dragon came out of nowhere—its earlier life remains a mystery—and burned the village to nothing. (See the entry on the Well of Dragons for more information on the Dire Dragon.)

Yajandra's house was all that survived. She now runs it as an inn while she studies the dying dragons who come to the Well.

She is indisputably the greatest living sage on matters of dragonkind. Her other fields of knowledge include history, magic, namelore, and biology.



# Appendix II: Wards of The Sword Coast



agical wards, often
found in the Savage
North, are even more
numerous in the Coast
lands. In the area cov-

ered by this book, wards are usually less powerful than those of the North—slaying innocent and perhaps friendly merchants by mischance is frowned on in the Coast lands, where trade is more important than grim survival.

As in the North, most human wards—and all those encountered by Volo—are variants of the 7th-level wizard spell wardmist. They are intended to defend folk and property from thieves, wolves, trolls, orcs, and monsters. Elminster warns that wards are used all over the Realms by the rich and by powerful wizards and priests—and that Volo has encountered very few of them, and of only the most common types.

The crafting of wardings began in the North, probably in ancient Netheril. The oldest wards are found in tombs and subterranean storage areas under ruins or temples sheltered from the creeping destruction of long-passing time, or in forest glades, where they have outlived the buildings that once stood around them. Ancient wards often include wild magical effects and prohibitions against magical items, which simply won't enter the *wardmist*. There are also instances of prohibitions against spells of a specific school or those manifesting as heat, fire, lightning, or cold. Some old wards incorporate *reverse gravity* effects, or *blade barriers* large enough to encompass an entire *wardmist!* 

# Wardmist

(Evocation, Alteration, Enchantment/Charm)

Range: Special Components: V, S, M Duration: Permanent Casting Time: 1 hour Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: Special

This 7th-level spell requires the use of an amount of silver larger in total volume than the caster's fist. Other material components are phase spider silk and three powdered pieces of amber of no less than 500 gp value each. (All the spell components are destroyed in the casting of the spell.) The caster must stand in an area that will become part of the ward and visualize the route of the desired ward boundary.



An area of 600 square feet per level of the caster may be enclosed. If the wizard tries to enclose too large an area, the spell fails and is wasted. Mages casting simultaneous wardmists may combine their protections.

The spell creates a wardmist. This is a 40-foot-high, 60-foot-wide band of permanent mist that must rest on the ground, floor, or other solid surface. (It need not be level.) The area protected by the ward is measured from the inner edge of the wardmist. The thickness of the mist is not included. The ward extends 40 feet beneath the surface of the ground, and may be narrower than 60 feet in width wherever desired. Its boundaries can twist and turn corners as sharply and as often as desired to protect a certain area, and they may exclude whatever areas the caster desires. Once cast, a wardmist can't be moved.

A wardmist can always be freely entered or left. Beings entering it are sensed by the spell, which reacts by flashing a radiant or audible warning (or both, as desired) to a specific spot or being. The spot or being is set upon casting, and it cannot be changed thereafter. Such a warning would still function in the location of a destroyed room (even in midair) or inside the tomb of a dead being.

Warnings classify those who enter the *wardmist* into two categories: those who bear ward tokens and intruders. *Wardmist* warnings transmit numbers and general locations of all intruders. Sight and all known magical and psionic means of scrying won't work through the boundaries of a wardmist. A being in the mist can see through the mist to a distance of about 10 feet in darkness, and 40 feet when light is present. One cannot see out of the mist though, even if one is only inches away from its edge. One cannot see out of the mist to either the area it excludes or the area it encloses. A wardmist can be seen over freely by anyone tall enough or stationed high enough to be able to do so.

When visibility is reduced by darkness, intruders in a *wardmist* who don't use lamps, markers, or other means of proceeding in a straight path will move in a random direction each round of movement in which they fail a secret Intelligence check. It is possible to wander, lost, in a *wardmist* for quite some time.

The caster of a *wardmist* spell can try to link certain types of magically animated or undead monsters to the ward as it is forming to serve as guardian monsters. To become guardians, these monsters must be present, and must fail a saving throw vs. spell.

When an intruder reaches a certain locale in a *wardmist* or has been in the mist for a set time, some guardian monsters are teleported to within 20 feet of the intruder. The types and numbers of guardian monsters are set by the initial *wardmist* spell but are limited by the available stable of guardians. Their



# Wardmist Guardian Monsters

# d8 Number & Type of Monsters

- 1 2d6 baneguards\*
- 2 1d3 blazing bones†
- 3 2d8 bonebats\*
- 4 3d4 helmed horrors\*
- 5 3d4 skeletons or 2d4 monster skeletons (MM, MC1)
- 6 1d2 watchghosts‡
- 7 1d2 wraiths (MM, MC1)
- 8 2d12 zombies (MM, MC1)

Monsters marked with an asterisk (\*) appear in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting box. Those marked with a dagger (†) appear in the Ruins of Myth Drannor boxed set. A diesis (‡) denotes those in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set. Those appearing in the Monstrous Manual<sup>TM</sup> game accessory are denoted by "MM," and those in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® volumes have the volume number appended to the abbreviation "MC." DMs lacking a particular source should substitute another monster from the list.

typical orders are to attack and destroy all intruders, although some may be instructed to subdue, disarm, and capture while dealing as little damage as possible.

Guardian monsters are kept in stasis by the *wardmist* when not active. They do not age, heal, or eat. They become inactive 2d4 rounds after an intruder is slain or leaves the warded area. A guardian monster can be healed at any time by

application of the proper potions or spells. A destroyed guardian is forever gone. It can't be resurrected or replaced by the *wardmist* spell. Monsters can be unleashed to wander in an existing *wardmist*, but to be linked to and teleported about by the ward, they must be part of the initial *wardmist* casting.

Only the types of magically created or undead monsters listed in the boxed text at left can be linked to a wardmist, although individual mages may have successfully modified their wardmist spells to augment this list. Tales exist of wards defended by golems and even by undead titans.

Mages may combine their efforts when creating a *wardmist* so as to give it multiple sets of guardians of the same or different types. Each mage casts a *wardmist* spell at the same time, though only one ward is created, and it is set to a single sort of ward token.

A few wards are linked to more powerful guardians, such as liches assisted by robed and hooded skeletons (to look like other liches or mages). These skeletons are imbued with spell ability to cast combat spells and have *magic mouths* cast on them to allow them to "speak." They act as decoys and are used to identify spellcasting intruders to their lich. There are even reports of multiple invisible stalkers linked to a *wardmist*—each being freed from servitude in Toril after they slay a certain number of intruders.

A wardmist doesn't seem to exist



for a being who carries the proper token. Ward tokens must be made of a certain material, and they must bear a certain rune that is drawn while a secret word is uttered. The material, the rune, and the word are all set during the ward's casting, and they cannot be changed thereafter. For convenience, tokens to a particular ward are usually of a common shape and size, but the wardmist will recognize anything of the right material that bears the right rune. Some ward tokens have been inset into the pommels of swords, for instance, or baked into clay jugs or statuettes. In some large holdings, warders carry rings of varying tokens just as they do rings of keys. Tokens can be made freely after the casting of a wardmist —but the requirements for a valid token can't be changed without using another wardmist spell.

A being bearing a valid token can't see or be affected by a wardmist and isn't subject to attacks by any guardian monsters linked to the wardmist. An intruder who seizes a valid token from another being, even while in battle with a guardian, will be instantly free of such guardian monster attacks.

Only one wardmist spell can exist in a given area. If a dispel magic is cast on a wardmist, it increases visibility around the caster by 20 feet, delays the appearance of any guardian monsters by a round, and sets off an immediate warning. Only a limited wish or wish can destroy a wardmist. Even repeated dispel mag-

ics will fail, and an anti-magic shell cannot form within a wardmist. If this is attempted, the anti-magic shell is wasted, and the wardmist is unaffected.

The most common addition to a wardmist is a band of armed human guards assigned to respond to the magic's warnings. Spell triggers are also popular; these are spells that have specific preset conditions to set them off. They then launch the effects of other "hanging" spells, also cast earlier.

For example, if someone enters the ruins of Stormwind Tower (an isolated mage-hold near Trollclaw Ford) by the front door, six identical mages appear all around him or her, hurling bolts of lightning. These mages are really projected images linked in some now-forgotten way to a rare spell known as web of lightning. Safe entry to the tower is by means of a secret passage whose entry is marked by a gargoyle statue, elsewhere in the ruins-a passage filled with the sword-wielding, animated skeletal arms known as dread. These creatures are detailed in the Ruins of Myth Drannor boxed set.

# Web of Lightning

(Evocation, Alteration)

Range: 40 yards + 10 yards/level

Components: V, S, M Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: ½





This 8th-level wizard spell causes the simultaneous discharge of six lightning bolts. Identical in properties to those bolts created by a *lightning bolt* spell, these bolts do 7d6 points of damage each and manifest in one of two ways.

One manifestation is widely used on battlefields: a starburst of six bolts radiating out from a single point visualized or chosen directly by the caster, who need not see its location. Four bolts spring out in the cardinal directions (forming an equal-armed cross), and two additional bolts leap out in two of the diagonals, in quadrants chosen by the caster.

The other manifestation of the spell is a ricocheting web within a

60-foot-diameter sphere. The sphere can be altered to fill a 30- by 30-foot room or smaller area, but not increased in volume. Compressing it does not affect damage or other spell properties. This effect is often fit into a single doorway, with the bolts leaping from the frame as an intruder steps through.

In either manifestation, target beings must make saving throws individually against all six bolts. They save against fewer bolts if the path of a bolt leaves them out of harm's way, as in most uses of the starburst.

The material components of this spell are four lodestones or a bit of fur, and a small, smooth rod of amber, crystal, or glass.



# Appendix III: Magical Items



ome of the magical items mentioned by Volo in his explorations of the Sword Coast lands are familiar to

Elminster. Of these, he permitted words about a few to remain in this edition of the guidebook, and consented to provide details of them for us, with the grudging words, "Well, I suppose all of ye can't get into *too* much trouble with these—but ye will, I know, and I await thy amusing tales of what befell then.'

Here, then, is what Elminster told us.

# Harvyn's Ring

*XP Value*: 8,500 *GP Value*: 16,000

When worn, this plain brass ring automatically grants any wearer (not wizards only) a +1 saving throw bonus, cumulative with any other bonuses the wearer may have, against any alteration spells and identical magical item alteration effects. If the wearer is a spellcaster able to cast alteration spells, foes facing his or her spells suffer a -1 penalty to their saving throws when she or he casts spells at them while wearing this ring.

The ring has another automatic, as-often-as-required power. It can purify water and drink by touch or immersion. This power is strong enough to neutralize acid or poison and render wines, beers, and spirits nonalcoholic without altering their taste, smell, or hue.

Harvyn's ring also has two powers that must be deliberately called forth. By will and concentration on the destination (which must be within sight, within 90 feet, and not through any magical or physical barriers), the wearer can *jump* three times in a day (144 turns), carrying up to 400 lbs. of additional weight as long as it is in physical contact and willed to come along, too.

The jumping wearer isn't magically protected in any way during transit, although the landing will be upright, balanced, and sure-footed. Jumps attempted with too much weight, to a destination too far away, or onto a surface that can't support the arriving ring wearer will result in falls, unmitigated by the ring.

The wearer of a *Harvyn's ring* can also cause it, by the utterance of a secret word graven on the inside surface of the ring, to emit a swordlike *force blade*. The word is different for each of the six known rings. This weapon can be called forth thrice every day (144 turns), and lasts for 1 turn—less if the effect is willed to cease earlier. Unused time can't be saved up for use later. The *force blade* is invisible except to those able to see magical auras or when the weapon is



covered with blood or another adhering substance, and can cleave through any magical barrier created by a 7th-level or lower spell or magical item equivalent, permanently breaching it in a 10-foot-radius circle centered on the blade. In some cases, such as a shield spell, this will completely destroy the barrier magic. The invisible blade does not clang, rust, chip, bend, break, or respond to heat, cold, magnetic, or electrical effects as metal does. It is simply a construct of force with a cutting edge and deals 4d4 points of damage per strike (4d6 to large-sized foes), being in all other respects a long sword. A fighter of high enough level can use it for multiple attacks and receives normal bonuses if she or he possesses specialization in long sword. The sword appears in the wearer's ring hand and cannot leave it. If the wearer opens his or her hand to grasp at something else, the force blade vanishes. It can't be used in the wearer's other hand or be taken by another being.

# Galdaeryn's Gage

*XP Value:* 2,500 *GP Value:* 6,000

Named for the fighting mage who first devised it, this single mesh gauntlet (mail glove) of either the left or right hand magically alters to fit the size and number of digits of a wearer's hand. It allows its wearer to hurl missiles such as rocks, sling stones, daggers, and axes with a +2

attack roll bonus. Use of the gauntlet doesn't allow the wearer to throw things normally too heavy or unwieldy to hurl and doesn't confer any proficiencies. Thrown stones do 1d2 points of damage, depending on size. Rocks as large as a target's head can deal ld4+1 points of damage.

The wearer of a gage can also try to intercept incoming missiles. Roll a d20 for the glove wearer. If the score is higher than the unmodified die roll of the incoming attack, the catch was successful. The gage literally catches physical missiles, and it can hurl them back at their source. This returned fire counts as an extra attack in addition to the gage wearer's chosen activity or attack for the round and is rolled at +2. If the *gage* wearer wants to redirect caught missiles at another target than their source, the hurling counts as a regular attack. If a catch fails, the attacking missile has its usual effect.

A gage can catch up to four magic missiles in a single round. Additional missiles will get through for the usual damage. Caught magic missiles are absorbed by the glove, not thrown back.

A Galdaeryn's gage protects the wearer's hand as well as a full plate gauntlet against a falcon's talons and other sharp things. It is affected by heat metal and similar magics. If its wearer is fighting with a one-handed weapon in the opposite hand, it can be used to grapple with hostile weapons. Treat it as a shield for Armor Class purposes when used in this fashion.



# Hand of Fury

*XP Value:* 2,500 *GP Value:* 7,000

This single mesh gauntlet (mail glove) of either left or right hand magically alters to fit the size and number of digits of a wearer's hand. When worn, it improves the wearer's Armor Class by 1 point. An unarmored warrior lacking a shield or high Dexterity would move from AC 10 to AC 9 by donning the glove. It allows its wearer two special attacks: *magic missile* and *forceblow*.

The glove's *magic missile* attack is identical to the 1st-level wizard spell of the same name. A *hand of fury* holds two such spells. Each unleashes three missiles causing 1d4+1 points of damage when used. When one such attack is used, it can't be called on again until 3 entire days (72 hours, or 432 turns) have elapsed.

The forceblow attack can be used only once per day After it is called on, 24 hours (144 turns) must pass before it can be employed again. A forceblow is never wasted. It can occur only when a successful attack lands, defined as a punch with the gloved hand that is deemed a use of this attack by the player as the attack is launched. Rather than normal punching damage, a forceblow does 6d4 points of damage, and has two possible additional effects. A struck victim must save vs. spell to avoid being stunned on the following round, and she or he must also make a Strength check to avoid being hurled away in a fall by the force of the blow, with possible additional damage upon landing. Stunned victims are reeling and unable to take any deliberate action the round

following the one they are struck in. Fragile worn or carried items exposed to the force of this strike or the impact of a resultant fall must make a saving throw vs. crushing blow or a saving throw vs. fall, as applicable, or break.

A hand of fury has one additional property. Its magic can be exhausted and converted into a single, automatically successful bend bars/lift gates attempt, causing it to crumble to dust. The glove must be touched to the barrier to be so used.

# Torc of the Titans

XP Value: 4,500 GP Value: 12,000

This plain, heavy, silver neck collar never tarnishes or breaks. It resists even reforging attempts. It allows the wearer to speak, understand, and read the tongue of titans and to call on titanlike strength in limited ways, as follows:

Once per day, the torc wearer can make a Strength check as if she or he were a titan of Strength 25.

Twice a day, a torc wearer can launch an attack with titan strength at +7 to the attack roll and +14 to damage, due to 25 Strength. If the attack misses, the attempt still wastes the torc's magic.

Thrice per day, a torc wearer can make an open doors or bend bars/lift gates attempt as if possessing Strength 25. The attempt to open a door is successful on a roll of 19 on a d20 or less, or 18 or less if it is locked, barred, or magically held. The torc wearer in this situation has a 99% chance of successfully bending bars or lifting gates.



# Appendix IV:

# Index



his index does not include references to people, nor to most building map references. Private homes

are listed only if they're of interest to the adventurer or historically minded sightseeing traveler. The Fortalices section lists all structures that have been built, or converted, for use as defensible strongholds in time of war. In uncertain times, travelers are advised to keep a bookmark at this spot in the guidebook when making fast travel plans. The structures may also appear under other headings, corresponding to other uses.

Places that function as both inns and taverns are listed in both sections. Tankard houses are a new attraction in Faerûn, fast spreading from the city of Berdusk where they first appeared. None are indexed here. Consult that city entry (pages 153—174) for names of these establishments.

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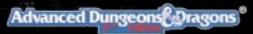
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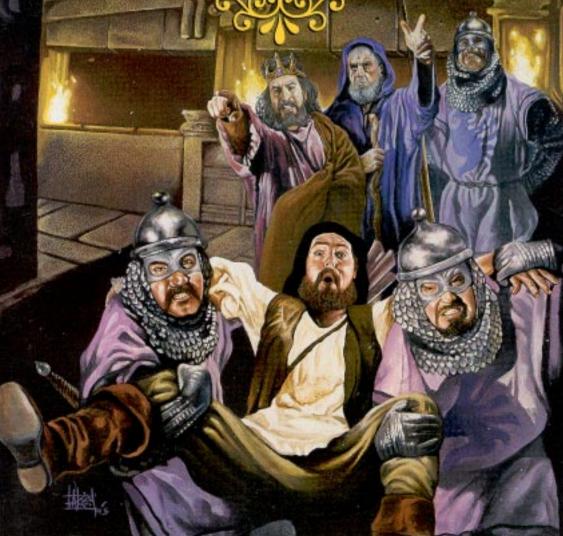
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# Volo's Guide to CORMYR



# Volo's Guide To Cormyr

Another morn brightens the rain And so I must travel on again To see fresh marvels ahead. Eating wayfarers' bread, The leavings are my only pain.

> —Synder Gallowglass, The Minstrel of Many Roads, "Ballad of the Wayfarer"





#### Dedication

To Wes Nicholson-

Grand host, greater booster of gaming, and a traveler even more energetic (and considerably more competent) than Volo.

A good man-may Earth and Toril alike hold many more of them.

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TSR Ltd. 120 Church End Cherry Hinton Cambridge CB1 3LB United Kingdom



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# Foreword



elcome to the fourth of my groundbreaking (umm, perhaps that's an unfortunate choice of word) travel guides. Many

folk have long clamored for coverage of the fair realm of Cormyr in my oeuvre (I don't know what that word means, but Elminster uses it, so it must mean something grand), and your wishes, ladies and gentlesirs, are my commands. I pray, therefore, to all the gods who may be disposed to smile favorably upon such efforts that your eyes also find favor with this latest of my works: Volo's Guide to Cormyr.

# Using This Guidebook

Entries have been included not for every hamlet or backlane crossroads in Cormyr, but for every place that's likely to be interesting—or unavoidable and useful—to the traveler. For ease of use, I have divided Cormyr into the districts familiar to most Cormyreans. From them I have plucked the cities to investigate first.

As you page through this guide, first you're presented with the cities and then the coast. These are followed by the heartlands, which are the area covered by the King's Forest—the endless deep green woods envisaged by most

folk thinking of Cormyr from afar. The section on the heartlands is followed by one covering the east reaches, where the countryside is more open, and finally by one on the almost-forgotten, mountainous west reaches. I think you'll be as pleasantly surprised as I was to find all the delightful backwaters and corners the Forest Kingdom holds.

The reader interested in things magical is urged to consult the second and third appendices forthwith. They contain much of interest to the visitor to Cormyr.

# What's Here and Why

A casual glance at this peerless tome may reveal to the discerning reader a slight paucity of information on the larger cities of the Forest Kingdom. Please be aware that this is not due to any lack of proper diligence on my part but is part of a deliberate plan:3 It is my purpose in this work to eschew repeated coverage of the all-too-familiar ground of what's where in Suzail, Arabel, and Marsember, and instead show the reader something of the countryside of the Forest Kingdom, the glories of its lesser-known and smaller settlements, and places even some Cormyreans may know little of. Read

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: The base flattery of the man disgusts me.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: Sigh. He's been taking lessons, hasn't he?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster: I used to sound like this—about a thousand years ago.



on, then, and discover the *real* Cormyr<sup>4</sup>—Volo's Cormyr.



#### Volothamp Geddarm

[Ahem. "Real" Cormyr, eh? Ah-hah. Well, the reader who hopes this book provides any sort of useful place-by-place guide to the fair kingdom of Cormyr will of course (and as usual) be sadly disappointed. Those who want to get a feel of the *flavor* of back-country Cormyr will, I trust, be generally well served by this work. As gossip, 'tis pure gold, and as entertainment, 'tis worth—several tankards. (Er . . . empty ones, of course.)

Ahem, yes. There's something I should tell ye. Volo spent his youthful energies doing what he does best—spying and then reporting everything folk would fain keep secret for good reason. When he was done, what he'd produced was a treatise on the security of Cormyr, how precisely the war wizards guard it, and how ye—or rather, a less honest and scrupulous reader—could shatter it and quickly bring about the downfall of the realm.

Mindful (sigh) of the beauty of Cormyr and how *some* of us are responsible enough that we'd like to preserve it, I set about expunging the most vital of his revelations. What remains is far more than enough for adventurers to get themselves into deep trouble and give Vangerdahast more than few anxious moments (hehheh). That should only make the realm stronger—and a more entertaining place to dwell in.]



Elminster of Shadowdale

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Delusions this grand are the final frightening stages of the descent into babbling idiocy. Hmmm, perhaps the lad would've made a good mage after all. . . .

Volo's Ratings System				
Pipes (Inns)	Tankards (Taverns)	Coins (Prices)	<b>Daggers</b> Alleyways, Courtyards, Etc.)	
Worst 15	0		1	Unsafe
1 33	ØØ		II	<b> </b>
Better & & &	OOO.			)angerous
4 8888	0000		III S	<b>\</b>
Best & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & &	00000	5 5 5 5 5	BBBB	Deadly







# The Forest Kingdom



elcome to a Volo's-eye view of Cormyr the fabled realm of ancient forests, galloping knights, happy folk, feasts that roar on 'til

moonfall, and proud keeps where bright pennants flap in the breeze. Cormyr is a place folk from the Dales to bustling Waterdeep to the back streets of Amnian cities to the crowded Vilhon Reach uplands dream of visiting. It is a land of chivalry and romance, where the throne has been held by Obarskyrs in an unbroken line since the realm was founded and ever-watchful war wizards keep the realm and the throne secure.

# Bearing Arms in Cormyr

Let those who read these words of practical advice to travelers not misinterpret my intent: I mean no ill to the throne or fair realm of Cormyr¹ but strive only to enlighten readers who might otherwise unwittingly blunder into unlawful acts or sensitive areas and thereby offend in ignorance.

The war wizards' vigilance makes a word or two of warning necessary: Anyone bearing an item clearly a weapon into Cormyr must seek out the nearest Purple Dragon guardpost and have these arms inspected and bound with peaces-

trings. For these purposes, a weapon is any knife larger than a belt blade used for dining, or anything that does harm when swung that can't be explained away as a wayfarer's staff or tradesman's tool. Purple Dragon patrols and passing war wizards are surprisingly frequent, and anyone going armed will be challenged unless their weapons are clearly tied. Being found with an unbound weapon-unless one has just defended one's life against an armed attacker and has witnesses who can attest to the fact that you didn't draw steel first-is grounds for arrest on the spot and a sentence of at least confiscation of goods and expulsion from the realm.

Only persons named in a royal charter of arms (customarily sold to adventurers' bands for sizable sums of money), bearing a license to sell weapons, able to prove that they belong to the Purple Dragons or the war wizards, or fulfilling other specific circumstances, have the right to bear arms in the realm. Some of the other valid reasons for bearing arms are: if one is of noble Cormyrean birth, if on militia duty, if pursuing weapons practice under the supervision of your local lord, if on a hunt sanctioned by your local lord, if temporarily attending a recognized hunting lodge, or if holding a Crown writ. Outlanders visiting Cormyr can only use the latter two reasons.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: Oh, no, not much. Bah! That such fools walk Faerûn!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>As little as 2,500 pieces of gold per person for a seven-day battle pass, or 3,000 gp per head for the more usual tenday pass, and upward from there. A permanent adventuring band charter can cost 25,000 gp or more.

A band of six persons or less is considered a fellowship and is charged only 1,000 gp for a charter, plus an annual tax of 300 gp. The first year's tax must by paid upon receipt of the charter.



Crown writs are issued to confirm temporary rights to bear arms. For example, one might confirm a person's status as a noble guest of the realm (such as a visiting envoy from another land), a noble guest's bodyguard, or a special messenger or agent of the Court. Such persons must either bear the writ with them, a Purple Dragon ring,3 or a Court token.4 In all cases, records exist to verify issuance of writs, tokens, charters, and the like. Travelers who wish to unlawfully go armed in Cormyr must be very good bluffers or their careers at large won't be long. Such vigilance by the Purple Dragons and war wizards keeps the realm largely free of casual brigandage.

# How Best To Behave

Cormyr's defenders are diligent and watchful. Folk who pry and openly seek information arouse suspicion, and they often earn themselves a body search and questioning by Purple Dragons supported by one or more war wizards. My coverage of several locales in Cormyr suffered in these pages because my curiosity made me unwelcome. Be warned.

Yet don't skulk fearfully about, either. Such behavior labels one as a thief and a fool. Cormyreans love their king and respect Purple Dragons, though they are wary in the presence of powerful nobles and war wizards, who're apt to be a bit overbearing and willful. Your average Cormyrean is honest, self-confident, and loyal to his or her country. For an illustra-

tion of what I mean, have a look at the lyrics to the popular ballad "The Cormyte's Boast" in the entry on Knightswood.

This is not to say one can't find folk who retie peacestrings in the secret knots used by Purple Dragons, but only wizards able to magically read thoughts can get away with doing so for long. The customary way of contacting such dark mages is to buy a drink in a tavern, letting the tavernmaster see a cord, hair, or straw tied around your finger. You'll be covertly probed to be sure you aren't a mage and questioned to force your thoughts into revealing any status as an agent of the Crown. If you're deemed safe, a fee of at least 500 gp must be paid when contact with the mage is finally made. For those not partial to their weapons, a simpler solution is to toss the offending items down a well or privy hole and, if questioned, claim they were stolen.

# Passwords

When caught armed, it's often simplest to brazen it out. Just act as if you've every right to bear arms. Caution whoever's accosting you to speak quietly, and mutter, "I serve the Crown!" Say no more, save to drop mysterious hints, until escorted into the presence of a war wizard—and you will be.

Assuming you're not facing Vangerdahast himself (in which case I fear your career is, as they say, sharply at an end), tell the august war wizard that your name and mission are known to Vangerdahast only, and utter, "My orders are to give you

<sup>5</sup>See the chapter on the heartlands of Cormyr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Appendix III of this guidebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>A Court token is a numbered brass plaque engraved with the Purple Dragon symbol.



only this password." Then choose from among the following valid passwords:<sup>6</sup>

- \* "Red night," to which the war wizard replies "Gray dawn," whereupon you add "And brighter morning!"
- \* "Thorn's keep falls," to which the war wizard replies either "Forever" or "No more." If she (or he) says "Forever," your reply is "By the grace of the Nine!" and if she says "No more," you say "As dreamed of."
- "Black sword," to which the war wizard replies "Meets green shield," whereupon you say, "To make red war."

Drop the phrase "seven eyes around the throne" to denote a personal, topsecret mission for the king. If a war wizard says "Bright star!" to you at any time, instantly reply, "But the well is dark!"

## Procuring Licenses

Another way out of trouble if you're caught armed is to produce a license that proclaims you are a Cormyrean sword merchant. These can be had from any local lord in the usual way of course, for a fee of 4,000 gp and an annual renewal charge of 2,000 gp first due at the next Greengrass. The approval process involves very slow and very thorough investigations of one's mind, past, and present doings by any number of nosy war wizards.

A false license can also be had from the man who grows an extra eye<sup>7</sup> and appears only on misty nights at the end of random

piers in Marsember, from a certain Suzailan professional escort to whom you must whisper the name "Sharanne" when you're in private, or from a serpentheaded man in the taproom of the World Serpent Inn in Arabel (The World Serpent is an establishment that can be found only by those who know how to enter it; everyone else steps into a run-down tavern called the Wild Goose when they stride through the door.) Purple Dragons have tried to slay or apprehend the snake-man on several occasions, but he commands transposition magic allowing him to switch his body with that of a beholder!

From any of these individuals—and probably others in Tilverton and Wheloon as well as several ambitious forgers in Suzail—one can get a license to sell weapons for 600 to 900 gp. Bargain shrewdly—those willing to perform a shady service or two for these vendors can get their desired document for a greatly reduced price.

A passage license can also be had for the transportation of weaponry in bulk through Cormyr that is not for use or for sale within the realm. This typically costs 25 gp per chest or crate; all weapons must be enclosed in locked containers. The authorities affix foil seals stamped with the Purple Dragon across all seams of such containers. If these are found to be broken when another border is crossed, the fine is 100 gp per container, plus forfeiture of whatever's in the container! Of course, replacement foil seals can be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: Improvise thine own and pray for luck if ye must use this stratagem. War wizards aren't so stupid as to not peruse this guidebook, rendering Volo's suggestions useless by the time ye read this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Probably a doppleganger. It's said he works for a powerful mage. Some whisper he serves Ildool, the local lord, whose corruption surpasses the double-dealing of even Sembian merchants!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>By knocking in front of the Wild Goose on an imaginary door beneath the signboard and then uttering the name of any deity of Faerûn. (Elminster didn't strike out this footnote. He just sighed and said, "Ah, well, there goes the neighborhood!" Then he grinned, very slowly.)



bought from many Cormyreans who aren't part of the government. In Marsember, especially, every street seems to house one or more such morally adventuresome individuals.

It should be noted that the passage of arms through the realm represents a threat to the security of Cormyr. What if a thousand Zhent caravans were to show up carrying weapons cargoes, gather in defensible locales within Cormyr, break open their arms all at once, and launch an attack on the Forest Kingdom from within? Because of the security risk that arms transport represents, Purple Dragon patrols and war wizards employing wizard eye spells keep more or less constant watch on the holders of passage licenses.

Smiths in Cormyr must themselves be licensed. They must also account for the usage of the metal that they procure to ensure that arms aren't made covertly within the borders of the realm and cached for use by brigands, rebels, or agents loyal to another land who enter the Forest Kingdom. Those applying for a smith license must prove residency within Cormyr; seek the sponsorship of a local lord, who will assign regular Purple Dragon patrols to check on the smith's whereabouts and doings; and pay 600 gp a year. The first year's fee must be paid up front.

Citizens of Cormyr must pay many other licenses and taxes of small amounts. The traveler can safely ignore these, except the ones that serve as admission to a trade fair or facility. Even so, Cormyreans are taxed far more lightly than the citizens of many countries and city-states, and there's a fascinating reason!

# The Crystal Grot

For centuries now, the Obarskyrs have been able to tax their subjects lightly and yet elude the influence of the richest noble and merchant families by staying out of debt to them. The reason for this is a private source of fabulous wealth. Somewhere in Cormyr lies the fabled Crystal Grot, a natural cavern whose walls are lined with sapphires—a thick layer of glittering gem crystals, possibly the largest gemstone concentration in all Faerûn!

The cavern was discovered by Amble Obarskyr, cousin to Ring Pryntaler. Aside from Amble, Vangerdahast, and every rightful king since then, only six people have seen it in all the years since then. These lucky six have all been Purple Dragons skilled in mining who were brought to the cavern by magical means to keep its location secret. Their duty has been to chip out crystal masses when the Crown needed to call on its wealth.

It is known—or perhaps falsely put about by folk of the Court—that the Grot lies somewhere under land owned directly by the Crown and is part of a cavern network haunted by a watchghost or some sort of lich. In recent years the gem cavern has been reached only via a *gate*. The location of this transport's other end is secret, though persistent rumors place it somewhere in the cellars of the palace in Suzail, in a room concealed behind a sliding painting, a tapestry, or a carving-ornamented wall.

The Obarskyrs have always been careful to spend their sapphire wealth in moderation, offering stones for sale in the Vilhon Reach, Waterdeep, Amn, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>That is, all of Cormyr's kings save Salamber and Gondegal.



similar distant markets to keep their value high. Yet, the existence of the Grot explains the rows of sapphires on the scabbards of all four swords of state in the regalia of the Court.

# The Swords of State

Four blades are revered in Cormyr and cared for carefully at Court. Thieves should be warned that war wizards can trace their whereabouts and that stealing one draws a succession of grimly determined Cormyreans willing to do anything to get it back! These hallowed blades are Ansrivarr, Symylazarr, Orblyn, and Rissar.

Ansrivarr is the battered, ancient blade of the Obarskyr line. It symbolizes the realm of Cormyr itself. Symylazarr, also known as the Fount of Honor, is the sword on which all nobles swear fealty to the Crown and with which all knights are dubbed. Orblyn, the Edge of Justice, is used to execute nobles found guilty of capital crimes and to detect falsehood in court sessions. Persons giving evidence must do so with their hands on Orblyn's naked blade, which flashes at any untruth spoken because of its permanent detect lie ability. Rissar is the small and bejewelled blade with which all royal marriage vows are made. The couple clasps it together while they speak their vows. Rissar's point also serves to spill blood in all blood vows undertaken at Court, such as the bond of loyalty to the Crown undertaken by every war wizard. It is rumored that the drops of blood sworn war wizards shed in this ceremony are carefully kept in vials by Vangerdahast, whom tales hold can work deadly magic on treacherous war wizards from afar by means of the precious droplets!

All four blades, when not in use, lie on velvet-covered plinths under crystal domes, each in a separate chamber at the Royal Court in Suzail, and the public can view them without charge. The swords are only displaced from these four great chambers when they are in use or when folk of royal blood have died. (Such nobles are laid in state on the biers normally reserved for the swords.) Visitors are urged to go and see these landmarks. Children go up to the blades on display and whisper their wishes (as do unrequited lovers) to the swords, for legend in Cormyr holds that the blades hear all told to them in confidence and act to aid the truly worthy of heart.

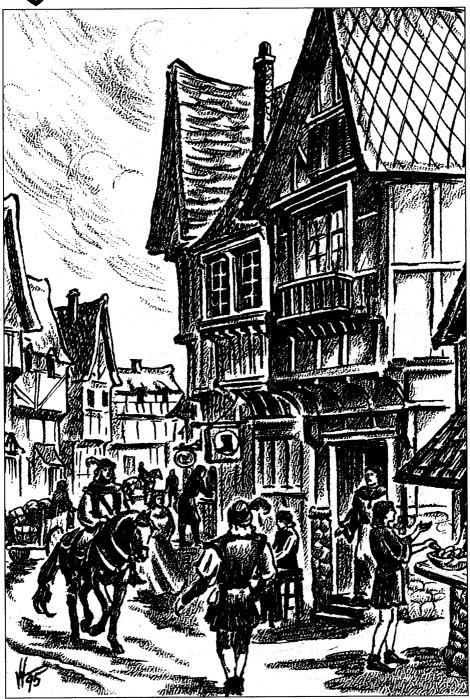
# The Character of the Realm

In Cormyr, travelers will find a happy, even romantic people largely content with their lot. This is best illustrated in a famous Cormyrean saying first uttered by Baerauble, Lord High Mage of Cormyr. Like Vangerdahast, Baerauble was a wizard who safeguarded the realm through the reigns of several Obarskyrs. This saying is now inscribed on his tomb<sup>10</sup> and has been adopted into everyday use by the people of Cormyr:

The gods do not grant to us all The shining mantle of the hero. Do what you can, And it will be enough.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>The tomb stands at one end of the Chamber of the Purple Dragon, with the Obarskyr Throne at the other. It is guarded at all times by two Purple Dragons, but visitors are allowed to pray at it and even touch it for luck.







# The Cities



ost folk of Cormyr live in the three cities of the realm: Suzail, Arabel, and Marsember. Persons who deal in wealth or want to

move in the circles of power in Cormyr and don't have the great good fortune to be born noble *must* dwell in Suzail or visit it often. Many shipborne merchants and other visitors to the Forest Kingdom have seen no more of Cormyr than its two port cities. There are even folk who live out their lives never setting foot outside the walls of Suzail, Arabel, and Marsember.

All three cities are given over to intrigue and gossip beyond the scope of this guide. Here I present a traveler's overview of interesting sights in Cormyr's cities. I can do no more, because I was repeatedly hampered by wrathful war wizards and Purple Dragons in my attempts to learn more. Yet it is my fond hope that travelers will find these pages useful in visits to Cormyr's three cities.

## Suzail Overview

Suzail, the capital of the realm and Crown City of Cormyr, contains a busy port; the most beautiful gardens I've yet seen inside city walls anywhere; a magnificent palace; a large, labyrinthine, highly efficient Royal Court; the largest fortress of the Purple Dragons in all the realm; and the dwellings of thousands of hard-working, prosperous tradesfolk who seem to love their city. It is smaller, cleaner, and easier to get around in than most capitals I've

seen in Faerûn, and it is home to some establishments that pleasantly surprise the visitor who turns away from the splendor of the Promenade and the Royal Gardens long enough to take the trouble to seek them out.

# Marsember Overview

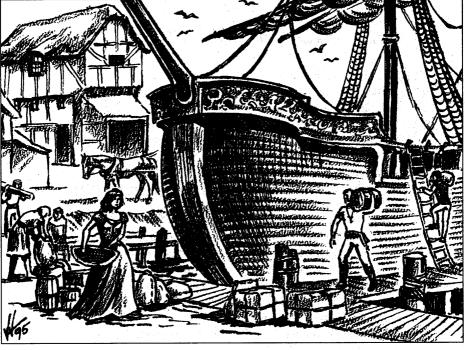
Marsember is an old, shabby, run-down metropolis of mildew where canals and docks are more numerous than streets, mysterious things are dropped from the bridges after dark, the stench of fish is ever-present, and there's not a live tree to be seen. Living here is very different from the romantic idea of living in Cormyr; it is the closest thing to living in a swamp that any city I know of offers. When it's not raining or storming furiously, with lightning stabbing down all around and howling winds whirling away everything not safely lashed down or behind shutters, heavy, clinging mists shroud the city.

A onetime pirate port independent of the realm of Cormyr, Marsember retains an air of shady dealings and corruption. Smuggling and money-laundering goes on here all the time, and there are even rumors that slave-taking lingers on behind the blank, shuttered faces of the old warehouses. I'd believe anything seedy of this place.

## Arabel Overview

A frontier feeling still pervades the Caravan City of Cormyr, though the recent





addition of Tilverton to the realm is lessening Arabel's role as the base for prospectors, big-game hunters, Purple Dragons, adventurers bound for the Stonelands, and upland ranchers. Long an independent city-state, Arabel was the site of Condegal's short-lived court and retains surprisingly sophisticated shops and services for such a backland center. Like Suzail, the diligent work of the authorities and the amount to which they regulate affairs keeps the city clean, uncluttered, and relatively safe. It is the perfect waystop for weary caravan merchants bound for the heart of the realm or headed out to trade for the riches of the Moonsea and the Dales.

Dominated by overland trade and a long-established local gem industry Arabel is often threatened by Zhentarim forces.

The Zhentarim keep a watch on it from the Stonelands, though their feywing riders seldom dare to pass over the city itself, raiding caravans and wayfarers on the road when good opportunities befall. For this reason, the Purple Dragon forces in Arabel are ever-vigilant. They are always on patrol or on exercises that keep them active in the shadow of Arabel—the lands immediately north and east of the city as far afield as Redspring Castle Crag and Hillmarch. These lands are ideal grazing country because of their numerous ponds and rivulets, and so numerous shepherds and keepers of herds of goats, cattle, and other herd animals have come to live here over the years. Skirmishes in the shadow of Arabel are frequent, both because outlaws often come here and because Zhentarim never seem to learn blood lessons.



# Suzail

The capital city of Cormyr<sup>1</sup> is a bustling, prosperous place, the monetary and cultural heart of the realm. It's always afire with new ideas, new ventures, new things to buy, and fresh ways of doing things. Fashion in Cormyr is set in Suzail, and with each passing year the city grows more important across Faerûn as a center of learning. King Azoun vigorously eradicates all attempts to form thieves' guilds and smuggling cabals, making this one of the safest cities in the Realms. It is also one of the wealthiest and cleanest, a place travelers love to visit and revisit.

Purple Dragon street patrols are numerous, and at any sign of trouble war wizards visibly accompany the soldiers. Curfews are also placed on the city to make it clear to all that no lawlessness is tolerated in Suzail. It should be noted that folk who have lawful business at night—loading or unloading a ship or shop delivery cart, for example—can always get license to break curfew, but they find themselves under the watchful eyes of an escort of at least three Purple Dragons all the time they're doing so.

As befits a busy trading center, the guards on the gate are always courteous to visitors unless their unseen war wizard overwatcher speaks within their heads to warn them they're facing a

Zhentarim or other evil mage, disguised monster, or known traitor to the Crown. Be advised that telling an intentional untruth to a guard on watch is an offense. It earns a Cormyrean a fine and placement on the ongoing list of people to question carefully for a year,<sup>2</sup> but usually wins an outlander a ban from entering the city on the spot.

## Citizenry

Over 129,000 registered citizens call Suzail home. Purple Dragon estimates place the average headcount closer to 148,000, with the population rising to 160,000 at the height of the summer trading season. The citizens are defended by a garrison of 4,500 soldiers, the Imperial Navy of Cormyr, and 92 war wizards who're known to reside in the city.

# Defenders

Mighty 80-foot-high curtain walls protect the city on all landward fronts, and a broad street, the Promenade, links the two main gates in this rampart. The Promenade runs from Horngate to the west to Eastgate in an arc that separates the Court precinct from the rest of the city.<sup>3</sup> Few attackers care to assault such a secure fortress. A large resident army mans those walls, and private citizens

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A map of Suzail can be found in the chapter on Cormyr in the Forgotten Realms® Campaign Setting box, in the Cormyr game accessory or in the Forgotten Realms Adventures hardbound.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>These punishments are assessed if an officer of the court judges so at the Royal Court. Purple Dragons aren't allowed to levy and collect their own fines. At any fining, both sides are allowed to argue their views. Appeals are possible but rarely granted. Such fines are usually 5 gp but may be as low as 2 gp or as high as 50 gp if the liar draws steel against a Purple Dragon and draws blood. The "question carefully" list is a roll of folk to whom the war wizard on gate duty pays careful attention, with the aid of a *detect lie* cast by an accompanying cleric if need be, while the guards conduct a thorough and time-wasting series of questions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>All citizens know that a particular four-note horn call means they must leave the Promenade as fast as they can move. They're drilled in doing so about thrice a year.



can provide respectable support. Indeed, the wizard Maxer was accorded the title Defender of Suzail for slaying four dragons that attacked the city!

The garrison is based in the Citadel of the Purple Dragons at the southeast corner of Suzail, and it is led by Sthavar, Lord Magister of the City. Three hundred of these soldiers are on civic street patrol duty at a time. Purple Dragons on this duty are housed in auxiliary barracks around the city walls.

The Purple Dragons share their fortress with the Navy: 14 major ships and their crews, totaling over 2,500 trained sea warriors known as the Blue Dragons. The largest vessel, the Crown of Cormyr, is a floating palace. It is often used by the royal family to relax away from the eyes of the Court or to entertain guests in secret. Both it and the Dragon, Cormyr's largest warship, are well equipped with ballistae and firepothurlers. The presence of such ships serve to persuade Westgate and other maritime powers that Suzail is too well defended to harass, but it's the small, fast coastal runners of the fleet, like the Blade of Espar and the Lance of Wheloon, that see action most often. Almost daily they're active against piracy.4

## Magecraft

Suzail is a major center of magical learning and power. It is home not only to the secretive College of War Wizards and Vangerdahast, Royal Magician to the Realm, but also the Council of Mages and such important wizards as Argûl, Baskor, Laspeera, Maxer, and Valantha Shimmerstar.<sup>5</sup>

All mages of 5th or greater level who enter Cormyr must register before the next sundown with a king's herald, a local lord, or at the Court. Once on the rolls, they're welcome at meetings of the Council of Mages. These meetings are evening affairs held in the Court in Suzail once every three rides (tendays). Vangerdahast or, in the rare event of his absence, Laspeera chairs the meetings. At such gatherings, decrees of the Crown bearing on magic are proclaimed, issues of interest to workers with magic are discussed, and mages can advertise their services or their needs for the aid of other mages or would-be mages. Many a starry-eyed apprentice comes to such gatherings.

The war wizards always have a recruiting representative at council meetings. Those mages who are most loyal to the Crown can by free choice and Azoun's agreement swear a secret oath and become war wizards in the service of Cormyr. The oath is known to involve a *geas* cast by Vangerdahast that prohibits war wizards from working to the harm of Azoun, his family, or the good of his kingdom.

### Worship

Suzail houses two major temples and several lesser shrines. The Towers of Good Fortune, dedicated to the worship of Tymora, stand on the east side of the Promenade where it meets the Royal Ride. The Silent Room, venerating

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The bottleneck of water between the Sea of Fallen Stars and the Lake of Dragons that is known as the Neck is a favorite pirate haunt, and rumors even today whisper that certain folk in Marsember are in league with privateers.

<sup>5</sup>These individual mages are described in Appendix I of this guidebook.



Deneir, is on the west side of the Promenade at the eastern end of the ornate iron fence that separates the street from the cobbled courtyards of the sprawling Royal Court building. For a fee of 5 gp per volume anyone can peruse books at the temple of Deneir, which houses a large library of both histories about and the fanciful fiction of the Dragonreach lands.

The city also holds shrines to Lliira, Oghma, Malar, Tyr, and Milil. Lliira's is located on the north side of Stonebow Street, between Torch Street to the west and Blade Lane on the east. Oghma's shrine is found on the west side of the Promenade, just inside Eastgate. Malar's shrine crouches on the north side of the Royal Ride a few doors west of the shrine of Tyr, and Tyr's shrine is perched in the angle where the Promenade and the Royal Ride meet. Finally, the shrine to Milil can be found on the west side of Coachwheels Way just north of Blade Lane.

#### Trade

Those with coins enough to spend can get almost as wide a selection of fine goods in the shops of Suzail as in fabled Waterdeep. Musical instruments, cloth, finished garments, sword blades, and armor in plenty are made in the city. From the docks these products, as well as copper bars mined near Espar, grain (sold in 25-lb. sacks, but priced by the quintal or hundredweight), and bone carvings from the uplands of the realm are exported. Most folk of other lands don't think of Suzail as a source of fine armor and blades, but they do remember the city for the good, durable, every-

day woolen clothes that are often trimmed with leather it produces.

In the past, sail-making and shipbuilding were important industries in Suzail. Almost all such trade has moved to Marsember and smaller coastal communities as land has become more valuable in Suzail and the transport of lumber into the shipyards has become an increasingly slow and expensive process. The Citadel of the Purple Dragons still uses its repair slips; lumber inbound there is usually floated in over the city wall by the spells of war wizards.

Resident shopkeepers sometimes use tally sticks in their dealings, but the visitor must pay in cash. In earlier days when coins were scarce, two sorts of trade tokens were used in Suzail. These flat, shaped pieces of wood branded with a treasury stamp are still honored, and Suzailans can turn them in to the Royal Court at double face value when they are used toward tax payments. The two sorts of discs are the anvil and the wheel, and they are shaped accordingly. Five anvils equal a wheel, and a wheel is worth 1 gp, so an anvil is worth 2 sp. Anvil and wheel trade tokens haven't been made for 30 years, so one can tell something about the age of found money caches by their presence.

# The Nobility

The noble families of Cormyr are a large, influential, and constant presence in Suzail. Their fashions, free-handed spending intrigues, and entertainments—in particular, their costume balls, feasts, and hunts—set the tone of the city.

Most noble families have homes in Suzail, some of them quite modest build-





ings hidden away on back streets. Tradition and comfort matter more to the nobles than opulence, except to the recently ennobled and merchants trying to buy their way into the nobility.

Suzailans see a side of their proud and mighty nobles that few others in Cormyr ever observe: Suzail hosts many nobles' parties held in the Royal Court on fine evenings. All too often, these affairs become debauched revels spilling over into the Royal Gardens. Many trysts are kept, arguments begun, and insults and witticisms exchanged at such events.

#### Fashion

In the streets of Suzail, half-cloaks, fullsleeved shirts or bodices, slim jeweled blades, and ornate masks mark one as a noble or a wealthy would-be noble. Cormyreans like to dress as dashing adventurers. Even folk who've never held a sword in their lives sport half-armor of *everbright* silver for formal wear or adopt the flared-boots, laced-leather-and-vest look of the reckless vivant. As dress goes in Suzail, so goes fashion in the rest of the realm, from feathers in hats to glitter-weave doublets. At least regal blue and dusty beige are favored colors now, so the finery doesn't tend to be hard on a visitor's eyes.

#### Fairs

Most Suzailans haven't the energy left at the end of their workday for evening revelry. They meet with friends at a favorite local tavern to talk over a tankard or two,



and then stumble home to bed. This tendency of the average Suzailan to congregate in small taverns is why visitors bearing news are so popular and good storytellers can earn a copper or two for a tale. Those Suzailans too drunk to be moved from their pub seat are usually carted to a back room of the tavern to snore their drink off. Just about every tavern in the city has a snoring room for this purpose, and tavernmasters who put customers in one are entitled to take from each of their purses the cost of one drink of the most expensive sort they've drunk that evening.

Entertainment for Suzailans comes in the form of day-long fairs and festivals. Most shops close down for these celebrations, which consist of all the usual seasonal feasts-Creengrass, Midsummer, Deadwinter Day, and the like-plus hiring fairs in spring, summer, and fall, and the Festival of the Sword. Hiring fairs<sup>6</sup> are gatherings of journeymen skilled in a trade held so that prospective employers can select new employees. The choice offered by a large selection of skilled craftsfolk pleases the employers, and such public hirings deny any merchants the opportunity to hire a desperate worker unfairly, dirt-cheap, to later undersell their rivals.

The Festival of the Sword, held on the fourth day of Kythorn, is unique to Suzail, representing the importance of the arms trade to the city. It consists of a mounted parade of people dressed in the best armor their shops make who gallop

around the streets as fast as safely possible (and sometimes faster!), waving blades, bellowing war cries, and sounding horns. They entertain the populace with their thundering progress until the Citadel bells toll, whereupon they all race to the gates in the ornate fence of the Royal Court. There they enter into the Court and are toasted with fine wine, sherries, and exotic liqueurs.

After thirsts have been slaked, these gallant armed folk look out through the fence into an area of the Promenade kept clear for the Triumph of the Sword. Many other townsfolk also gather around this area to watch a fully armored fighter combat and slay monsters. When the battle is done, the fighter casts the killing blade into the air and general feasting begins.

Of old, the monsters slain by the fighter were people in costumes, and the battle was play-acting. Later, real monsters were brought in, caged, and the battle was in earnest—and often deadly for the fighter! These days, captured jackals and leucrotta that war wizards have magically altered into the shapes of monsters are slain. These beasts aren't given time to become familiar with their new bodies, nor do they command any special powers of the beasts whose shapes they wear (for example, dragon or gorgon breath).

Suzail has one other interesting festival: Chasing the King. It is celebrated on the sixth day of Marpenoth. It seems Boldovar Obarskyr, who reigned briefly some centuries ago, was a wildbeard, or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Hiring fairs are different from trade fairs. Trade fairs are held in smaller communities as a way of attracting merchants who otherwise wouldn't bother to travel to them (thus never giving local folk the chance to buy their goods). A locksmith, for example, wouldn't normally bother to come to Hillmarch, but the folk there would occasionally like to buy reasonably priced locks from a selection, not make do with a peddler's single, vastly overpriced lock. So, trade fairs are held.



madman. Although he was usually of calm and normal temperament, he'd suddenly fly into berserk, killing rages, seize a weapon, and set off across the city hacking and slashing at everything and everyone who got into his way until dusk. He eventually perished as a result of driving his blade through his favorite consort, who was trying to soothe him and stop one of these rampages. Her falling body dragged the king, who wouldn't let go of his sword, over the edge of a parapet. He was impaled on an array of upright lances bundled for transport on a cart standing below.

In the present-day festival, the unfortunate king is represented by a criminal already condemned to death. This miscreant is given a blunt sword, encased in full armor, and furnished with a belt of potions of healing. Then he's let into the streets and not allowed out of the city until sundown. (Some men have shed their armor and swum the harbor or crawled through the sewers to get out of Suzail earlier.)

Anyone who likes can attack the fleeing "king," who can't run with any weapon but the one he was given and can do anything on his run without fear of reprisal. (The "king" is allowed to seize weapons raised against him and use them on their wielders.) One fleeing "king" set several streets ablaze, which kept a lot of folk too busy to harm him, but he tried to hide in the smoke and died. Townsfolk usually don't have to worry about being struck down by surprise by the fleeing miscreant. He's usually at the center of a whirlwind of barking dogs, running boys, and jeering journeymen.

If the false king can stay alive until dusk, he is fully healed by a priest of Tempus hired for the occasion, given 50 sp, a good horse, food, and clothing, and he goes free. Several criminals have so won their freedom in recent years. The criminal must agree to play the king, but the lord chamberlain chooses who is asked.

I wasn't able to get all of Suzail's celebrations straight, but there are at least two each month throughout the year. Each is an excuse for parades, drunken revelry, minstrelry, wrestling in the streets, and eating far, far too much! The day after each festival all businesses except restaurants are closed. Most folk spend it visiting family and friends and dining out.

## A Look Across The City

The northern part of Suzail is all tall, narrow, grand houses that are complemented by the rolling greenery of the spacious Royal Gardens. The spectacular bulk of the Palace of the Purple Dragon and the Royal Court rise out of this. But what lies outside the wide arc of the Promenade? Well, the bad part of town stretches to the west, near the harbor around the open market. Some gentlefolk never venture there. To the east stands the Market Hall, into which farmers from outside the city stream at dawn to sell their fresh produce to sleepy-eyed servants.7 Also to the east lie the city garrison (the Citadel of the Purple Dragons) and the city jail (the Lock-Up).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Visitors often confuse the market at the west end of the city, where one buys tools, furniture, clothing, and gew-gaws, and the Market Hall on the east side of Suzail, where merchants meet and farmers sell food.



Between the far east side and the far west side of town lie bustling, close-crowded shops, houses, and inns. These tend to be more expensive and taller nearer the Palace of the Purple Dragon and cheaper, noisier, and more rundown as one nears the docks. The oldest noble families almost all dwell north of the Promenade.

The docks are a whirlwind of activity apt to be dangerous to the bystander. Overloaded carts and overloaded burdenbearers are constantly rushing about, cursing each other and their loads. The harbor is a place of few entertainments. The stink of rotting fish is strong, and it is good place to watch gulls mate and paint the countryside white. Except for the everpopular pastime of watching ships from far-off ports arrive and leave, and seeing their exotic crews and the lady escorts of Suzail who come to meet or bid good-bye to them, there isn't much to do.

The city has a wealth of shops, inns, and taverns, and boasts some truly splendid restaurants. Eating out is a citywide pleasure and tradition. A fast-growing custom is to have gournet meals run in—that is, delivered hot to one's abode.

By night, continual faerie fire radiances light up the Promenade with bright amber tones. These radiances also illuminate major cross streets at each intersection, but appear less frequently than on the Promenade. They make Suzail less smoky than some cities, as torches and candle lamps are fewer, and

frequent Purple Dragon patrols render even the darkest streets relatively safe.

#### Landmarks

Although Suzail is a busy port with shops and eateries of sophistication and repute, its most important building is the Royal Court. The Palace of the Purple Dragon, of course, is more magnificent, but the Court is unique: a sprawling labyrinth of interconnected buildings, erected and expanded over the centuries as needed. The turrets in one place may clash with the sloping roofs in another, but the assembled pile stretches along almost a quarter mile of the Promenade and is undeniably impressive. The Court's several thousand chambers are connected by arches, servants' passages concealed discreetly behind tapestries, cross-galleries, balconies, and sweeping stairs. The Court has its own deep wells, its own streets (in the cellars), and even enclosed glass-roofed courtyards where fountains gurgle softly and harpists are wont to play.

This grand structure houses the legal and administrative bureaucracy of the government of Cormyr, from the offices of Alaphondar, Sage Most Learned of the Royal Court<sup>8</sup> to the rooms of Anzser, Lord Chamberlain of Suzail and Master of City Revels, who oversees the issuance of all permits, licenses, city ordinances, and tax writs.<sup>9</sup> Royal guides and escorts wait here and royal surveyors work on their maps

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Alaphondar is *the* expert on the history, genealogy, and court law of Cormyr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>The post of lord chamberlain was introduced in response to long-ago plague problems, when plague spreading became a crime. The position began as the overseer of refuse carts leaving the city and fresh food and water carts entering Suzail. During plague times thieves were claiming folk had plague and slaying them, seizing all their valuables, and then burning their homes in order to return to the cooled ashes later and look for cached coins. The creation of the position of lord chamberlain took away such thieves' ability to perform such vigilante acts and claim that they were acting legally.



and charts here. This the heart of power—and intrigue—in Cormyr.

The Court even has its very own fishpond where salmon, trout, and silverfin swim until they're caught with dip nets for use in meals at the Court and Palace. Court cooks feed these fish every day and also tend to a smaller eel pool. <sup>10</sup> So large and confusingly laid out is the Court that one can wander its chambers all day and fail to see everything—or to find a particular room or person one is seeking.

Guests at court are usually housed in apartments in the Royal Court. Only rarely, since assassination attempts have grown numerous, do even the most exalted guests stay in the Palace.

Upland Cormyreans speak of the Royal Court with reverence: It's their place amid the nobles' halls and the grand villas of the wealthy, second only to the Palace itself. At one end of it stands the Hall of Honor, where one can see the arms, armor, and other relics of the heroes of Cormyrfrom the pitchfork that the farmer Jult of Waymoot defended an early queen of Cormyr with when she was menaced by orcs to the 7-foot-long boar blade wielded by the giant Baron Hlombur when he split the skull of the orc lord Aragh. (It is displayed, of course, with the riven skull.) Everyone is welcome to see the glories of the past and take pride in the valiant deeds of forebears here.

Along the many south-facing windows of the Court runs the broad Promenade, the most important street in Suzail and one of the best shopping strolls in the world. On the other side of the Court, the rolling green beauty of the trees, lawns,

mazes, fountains, and flower beds of the Royal Gardens stretch out all around, down to the glimmering waters of Lake Azoun, where in warm months pleasure sculls await and swans glide. At one end of the Court, across a small strip of cobbled court where three watchful wizards always stand guard, rises Vangerdahast's Tower, the darkly slender abode of the Royal Magician to the Realm and Chairman Emperius of the College of War Wizards.

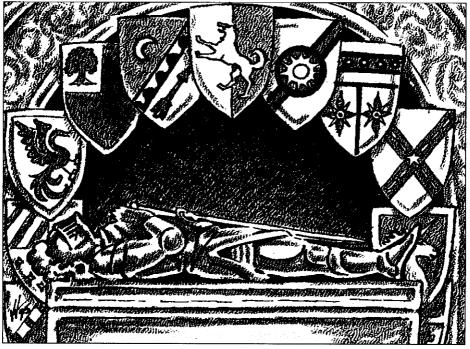
Many tales of magic, messages, maps, and inscriptions hidden behind the paneling of the Court's rooms make the rounds in Cormyr, and most are true. Also true, however, is the far-less-oftenheard rumor of diligent magical eavesdropping by loyal war wizards carried on constantly in every chamber and back passage of the Court. Visitors are warned!

The Palace of the Purple Dragon rises out of the wooded Royal Gardens like a fairy-tale castle, all slender spires, balconies, and pennants. It houses private apartments for all four families of the blood royal: the ruling Obarskyrs, the Crownsilvers, the Huntsilvers, and the Truesilvers. The opulence of its tapestry-and painting-hung chambers is legendary. It is a rare thing for a Cormyrean to be invited inside: "He's been to the Palace!" is a sentence uttered with awe in upland villages of Cormyr.

The Royal Treasury under the Palace is also famous, though very few visitors have ever seen it. The vaults are said to be heavily guarded by magic, traps, and monsters, and to hold great wealth and magical treaures. The truth of these rumors has been confirmed by many archmages over the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Freshwater eels have recently come to be considered a delicacy in Suzail, especially when accompanied by exotic sauces. Cooks each have their own secret recipes.





years, including the Zhentarim magelord who tried to seize all he could and ended up blown to bloody mist in front of all the Cormyrean court when a stolen device he was carrying went off.

The city also boasts some impressive statues. Even at intersections not guarded by such offerings look for carved beasts on building corners. The gargoyles at the meeting of Dragonfall Alley and Ustor's Street are particularly fine, and like several such specimens around the city, locals swear they can fly off to fight to defend Suzail if one but gives the right command.

What follows is description of a few of the more spectacular or fine establishments of the city, although it is not an exhaustive listing of all places worthy of note.

### Places of Interest in Suzail

Shops

As well as the large, signboarded shops, countless small businesses dot the streets of Suzail. I remind the traveler to look at doors for chalked messages like: "Mushrooms Sold" or "Herbs." Many women who keep to the home make cloaks or fruit cakes or keep a milk cellar, and many lads can be hired on the street for loading or unloading carts or ships at the docks.

Suzailan shopkeepers sometimes use tally sticks when dealing with each other rather than cash. These tally sticks are wands notched by passing Purple Dragons in a particular way. The Royal Court oversees such exchanges and metes out sentences for the dishonest.



A miscreant shopkeeper is often chained to a stone chair in the Market Hall for a day. Not only does he lose a day's takings, his punishment is also to have defective wares hung around his neck or burnt at his feet. If he sells bad produce, wine, ale, or scent, it is poured or smeared over him. Visitors committing such crimes are punished the same way and then suffer confiscation of all goods. They are then exiled outside the realm for the season as fast as they can be escorted by the next Purple Dragon road patrol.

#### Belaeron's Best Bread

Baker

\$ \$

This small, aromatic shop on Low Lantern Lane produces bread for customers for 3 coppers a loaf the morning after they bring in their dough. It is typical of the turn-your-dough-into-loaves quickshops found here and there in most cities around the Inner Sea. Belaeron's also bakes his own wares: hard biscuits, wheel loaves, and tarts. He sells them for a flat 1 sp per basket. A basket holds 50 or so biscuits, three loaves, and nine or so mince tarts—and you get to keep the flimsy wicker basket.

#### The Ring of Coins

**Pawnshop** 



This pawnshop on Torch Street is known for the variety of wares it offers. It's where bailiffs, next of kin, and adventurers bring oddities they can't be bothered trying to peddle. As a result, one can find many sets of thieving tools, outdated fur-

niture, wild costumery, canes that fold into stools, lamps carved to look like leaping lions, and the like. The selection is always interesting, but some of what's offered for sale may be stolen goods.

#### Tavernant's Tellings

Printer

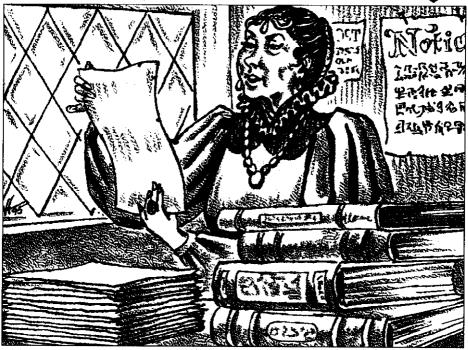
\* \* \* \* \*

Printers are still a rarity in the Dragonreach lands, and they command high prices. Lady Tavernant, the elderly and eccentric last of her line, loves to give parties where she can befriend young and dashing noblemen, and she grew tired of the time and expense of having handwritten invitations done up for each such occasion. So she started her own print shop, where linen rag paper is made and printing is done.

To manufacture a printed invitation or broadsheet, the paper is made page by page by dipping trays with mesh bottoms into the pulp. The paper is then dried, the sheets removed from the trays, and the paper edges trimmed as desired. Metal is poured into molds engraved by a hired goldsmith to form individual letters. These letters are assembled in wooden frames by hand, along with woodcuts for illustrations. The frames are then laid in recesses in stone and inked, whereupon sheets of paper are slid into the press and screwed down onto the inked pages.

A single sheet of type takes a day or more to compose, costs 5 gp, and every copy of it is another 1 sp thereafter. Copies must all be ordered within a tenday. After that, the wooden form is stripped so the type can be reused.





Books bound and covered by the printer cost 1 gp per page plus any costs for exotic substances used on the coverboards of the book such as tooled copper, gems, or dragonhide.

Lady Tavernant's shop is roaringly popular, and several merchants are scrambling to set up competing shops. Almost every business in town has had advertising broadsheets, notices about new or seasonal wares, or menus (in the case of restaurants) printed and posted, and the first lost-and-found and itemswanted postings are beginning to appear on walls and posts. The owners of stone buildings have even taken to coming out with torches and burning off unwanted notices.<sup>11</sup>

The Wedding Knight

Fine Clothes

This stiffly expensive shop on the Street of Staves sells finery to nobles, fops, and others desperate for just the right look—as long as the desired look is overdone and visibly expensive. Brushed velvet and cloth-of-gold are everywhere. Glittering gems adorn most hems, and the flash and sparkle of minor lighting spells can be seen as the models employed by the shop drift silkily around the carpeted aisles. The Wedding Knight is a provisioning place for those who want to "make a scene at a scene," as the old saying goes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>This is, in fact, the origin of the Suzailan expression scorched news, as in: "Have you heard about Thaeral the butcher? All over town they're saying it—'tis the latest scorched!"



#### Clubs

Suzail is a city of clubs. Just about everyone, from the people who run the manure carts of night soil to dungyards well north of the city<sup>12</sup> to the haughtiest old-blood nobles, belongs to at least one of these gathering places. A rule common to most such places is that a member can bring just one guest.

Most clubs serve food and drink and provide sleeping rooms for members who'd rather not stay at an inn or their own homes for various reasons—from lack of coin to wishing to go about unobserved to domestic strife. Some of the more unusual clubs include:

#### Bindle's

The club to be seen in this season, this nose-in-the-air establishment is a place to eat both berry-filled and savory tarts, drink your choice of the contents of extensive cellars, and chat with friends. Spells convey soft singing and minstrelry around the rooms to ensure your conversation can be heard only from close by, and the waitresses are clad in the illusions of leaping flames. Their blazing limbs provide the best sources of light since faintly glowing tables are the only ever-present radiances, so waitresses asked to stand close to customers aren't usually being asked to do anything improper.

Merchants have adopted this club as a place to talk serious business and sign agreements. Lately, these businesspeople are beginning to hire actors to pose as drunks. The fake drunks then persis-

tently annoy young nobles whose rowdy carousing makes dining unpleasant or dangerous for the businessfolk until the rowdy people leave. The once-haughty owners are learning that merchants pay better than nobles.

#### The Osculatory

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The Osco is a meeting place for single Suzailans avidly seeking companionship. Its name means *kissing club*. This noisy, crowded place is a dimly lit labyrinth of secluded tables and curtained booths. All seating is clustered around one dance floor or another, and each floor has its own merry minstrels.

The Osco's apt to become wild when the hour is late and many tankards have been emptied; public displays of affection are everywhere. Those interested can find it behind the purple door at the north end of Dancing Druid Lane.

#### The Society of Stalwart Adventurers



Home to explorers and adventurers, this exclusive club is housed in an old, luxurious mansion boasting many fireplaces and stuffed monsters' heads. The monster heads are usually hung with caps and items of personal clothing as a result of revelry. It also has an extensive library of old adventurers' journals—both members' writings and other tomes aggressively purchased from all over Faerûn or copied from originals at Candlekeep.

The stews are excellent here, and they don't, I was assured, consist of monster

<sup>12</sup>Farmers get fertilizer here.





kills. If any of the serving staff has fangs, horns, claws, and occasionally tentacles—well, its ranks include a few dopplegangers given to pranks or to impersonations for practical reasons.

Seek the lantern-flanked dragonstone archway on Swordstars Lane. Nonmembers are challenged at the door. Don't be surprised if the butler looks less—or more—than human. Guests are only allowed into two anterooms off the entrance hall.

#### The Stag Transfixed

\* \* \*

The haunt of archers, crossbowmen, and hunters who use darts, this dim, smoky place is just the place to go if you want to hire lads and wenches who can put a shaft through your least favorite foe's left eyeball by night and from around a corner. That is, it's the right location *if* you have coin enough to make them break off their endless tales and quaffing of strong stout to listen.

Seek the green door at the south end of Lonesome Lane. All weapons must be checked with Clarella at the entrance.

#### Restaurants

Suzail has a lot of restaurants, and many come and go with the seasons. They reappear only for the trade rush in the warm months under new names and in new places to exploit the tax break the lord chamberlain gives to all new businesses. Moreover, a wide variety of services go by the title of restaurant, from shuttered dockside windows that serve



hot fish rolls and watered ale to haughty establishments where each diner has a personal waiter. Out of this spectrum everyone has his or her favorites. The entire restaurant roster could fill this book, so I'll mention just two places worthy of the visitor's attention.

#### The Old Boot



The name of this establishment refers defiantly to the conservative, elderly patrons who frequent it.13 They like peace, quiet, good food, warm and private rooms to eat in with friends, and short waits for hot meals, and the Boot delivers all of these. This also makes the Boot ideal for the weary traveler who wants a good feed without any hassles or surprises. The tendency of the staff to put any outlander in his own room in order to not to offend the haughty regulars is ideal for someone who just wants to enjoy their meal. The experience is like dining in one's own mansion-if one's mansion has a competent but uninspired cook. Don't expect strong seasonings.

#### The Puffing Jester



The Puffing Jester has a service that delivers gourmet meals to your door. The delivery runners dress in belled caps like the jesters of yore and are often out of breath when they arrive. The food may or may not be hot, but it usually began its brief life as something worth eating.

A former bread shop, the Jester doesn't offer any sit-down eating, but some folk love to come and stand by the door to smell the cooking and watch the sweating, cursing crews—in those caps!—wrestling trays of savory tarts or long spits of roast fowl around the steaming kitchen. I've tucked a favorite Jester recipe in at right; its portions are generous enough to feed a family.

#### Taverns

Suzail is well furnished with watering holes, just as it is with restaurants. I set forth but a pair for your guidance and appreciation. If the evening is fine, a stroll down the city's back streets in search of a new tankard toss<sup>14</sup> is always worth the time.

#### The Golden Goblin



The Golden Goblin is the strutter's thirst-drowner. Here angry men come looking for fights, and folk who want you to think they're as tough as stone statues stand, drinks in hand, acting as tough as—stone statues. This is all amusing to watch if you're writing a book about swaggering adventurers but is a bit much for an old shopkeeper who wants to put his feet up with a tankard.

A huge statue of a goblin leers from a perch on a shelf on the wall behind the bar. It lights the place with a golden *continual light* radiance. It's not a magical statue, so don't bother it.

<sup>14</sup>Tankard toss is the Suzailan slang term for a tavern.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Elminster: In Cormyr, the term old boot is used where you would say old fogey.

#### Roast Gammon Pie



1 large ham (Be it as large as a hog's head or greater!)

1 large goose egg

1 cup dried flamefruit 15

1/2 cup zzar

1/2 cup brandy

3/4 cup honey

1 fist of butter 16

2 large onions

4 sticks celery

3 cups pecan nuts

4 cups of the juice of any fruit

3 spoons of mustard 17

1 finger 18 of ground cloves

1 Finger of ground coriander

The rind of any fruit

And for the pastry jacket:

2 cups milk

2 cups flour

1 handful of salt

1 pinch of dried sage

4 eggs

Take ye the flamefruit and chop it fyne. Take also the onions and the celery and chop them. Dice also thy pecans, and synge them in the hearth flames so they give off a slight smell but be not burned. Let the oven, wherein the pie be cooked anon, be made hop and kept that way. A brick bread oven is best for this.

When all be readie, mix the chopped ingredients in a bowl. Stir the mustard and all liquid ingredient together in another bowl, last breaking the goose's egg and stirring it in, too. Then stir into this the bowl of choppings.

Take ye the ham and bone it, and into the cavity pack the mixed ingredients. (Set aside the bone for stocke.) Sew up the ham with fyne twine, and wet the seam well. Prop upward with stones on an oven tray against spillage. Put in the oven.

Turn ye to another task, so that goodly time passes. <sup>19</sup> Then take the gammon out of the oven to let stand as you prepare the pastry.

In another bowl, break in the eggs, retrieving the shells. Mix in the rest of the pastry makings and beat well. When all is a stiff froth, brush well over all the gammon, letting no part be uncovered, and put in the oven again. Set to warm nearby a covered roasting pan. When the pie is light brown, take it from the oven and put it in the heated pan.

Cover and hurry to the customer. Open not the pan until you are at their door. The pie should then be a golden brown.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Elminster: Substitute apricots.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Elminster: Unsalted, of course. Only barbarians salt their butter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>A lot of mustard is grown in the east reaches of Cormyr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>A finger of spice is, of course, a heap large enough to stay on a cook's finger. For those who do not appreciate doing balancing acts, just thinly cover the top of your thumb with dried spice and that's enough.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Cook it for just under half an hour the first time and a little less than that long for the second baking with the pastry on.





The Laughing Lass

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The Lass is a cozy, orderly place that is kept that way by a polite but alert—and large—staff of bouncers. Purple Dragons and war wizards know they're not welcome here when in uniform and on duty since sailors, hireswords, and adventurers gather here to drink and make deals.

The tavern's name reflects its other use as a makeshift festhall. Veteran adventurers are well aware that the best way to fence stolen goods, make contact with outlaws, or arrange shady deals in the city is with the help of one of Suzail's lovely professional escorts in a stout-walled room upstairs at the Lass. True veterans even remember to finish their drinks.

#### lnns

Suzail has many inns, and frugal people also find that many Suzailans with space to spare rent upper rooms by the tenday—look for notices at the Market Hall and at both city gates. Most inns rent rooms by the month between the Feast of the Moon (late fall) and Greengrass (early spring). Prices range from 25 to 65 gp; most are 50 gp.

Here are a few inns that welcome outlanders and adventurers:

#### The Dragon's Jaws



Formerly Suzail's most famous tavern, this popular establishment recently



began renting rooms and so must now be considered an inn. Situated at the southwest corner where the Promenade and the Street of Staves meet, the Jaws is handy for visitors entering the city by Eastgate. Its is my favorite place to stay in Suzail, even if you're apt to meet dangerous folk in the taproom.<sup>20</sup>

To Suzailans the Jaws is a place to meet for business, to gather to gossip, and to sit and watch competitions—and visitors. The good wine cellar and even better food of the Jaws are justly praised, and it is almost always crowded when open. An artfully placed stone of silence<sup>21</sup> keeps the din of the taproom away from folk trying to sleep in the back (inn) wing. The Jaws's dining room is open dawn to dusk only; tavern hours are dusk until dawn.

Much of the enjoyment most patrons derive from a visit is due to the swift, anticipatory hospitality of the dwarf bartender Milo Dudley. Milo sees all and is ready for any patron's need—be it a refill, a bodyguard, or a place to sleep off the effects of overindulgence—before the need becomes imminent.

If Milo is the perfect friend and servant, the gnome owner of the Jaws, Gnorm, is the life of the party of evenings at the Jaws, greeting regulars by name and with a new (bad) joke for them to enjoy. A retired adventurer, he's the inn's resident champion at the

frequent eventide tale-telling or axe, knife, or halfling tossing bouts. Gnorm doesn't serve patrons, however. If queried, he'll explain that he's retired, after a11.<sup>22</sup>

Many adventurers and sightseers seek out the Jaws because it's the site of two famous battles. The adventurer Samhrin once unmasked, fought, and slew a mind flayer in the taproom. The same chamber was largely destroyed when the evil Dramordugas of Thay picked a fatal quarrel with a saucy, young female mage who turned out to be a gold dragon! She apologized afterward and donated most of the dead Red Wizard's wealth to repairing the place.

The money paid for an expansion along with the repairs that made possible the Dragon's Jaws's subsequent change to an inn. This latter encounter also gave the tavern its present name and led Vangerdahast to implement security measures to protect the nearby Royal Court and Palace of the Purple Dragon. At the time of the incident, it was known as the Red Sword.

#### The Leaning Post

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This quiet, good inn doesn't offer many frills—just quiet surroundings, simple but good furnishings and service, and secure stabling. "No headaches" is the motto of the staff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>See the novel Once Around the Realms, by Brian Thomsen (TSR, Inc., 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>A fist-sized stone upon which a mage has cast a *continual silence*. This spell is cast for hire in many places up and down the Vilhon Reach, where crowding—and thus, noise—has long been a problem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Many patrons claim to have found the waitresses even friendlier than Milo and Gnorm, but the frequently told and Inaccurate tales about their character have no place in this or any other guidebook. Molly Sara, Rustreene and the rest are just very welcoming ladies, that's all.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Secret passages, wands, and war wizards are said to be involved.



The Post stands on the north side of Garth Street where it meets the Hunt Bide and is owned by Barandos Hawklin, an important deal-maker in Suzail and head of the Hawklin noble family. It reflects his unflinching standards for no-nonsense quality.

#### The Nightgate Inn



Standing hard by Eastgate and just outside the city walls, the Nightgate is the only lodging accessible to travelers arriving after the city gates are shut at dusk. It looks like a fort<sup>24</sup> and boasts stone walls fully as thick as the Citadel. This makes it damp and gloomy yearround, but roaring fires keep the cavernous common room toasty even at the height of winter gales.

The same can't be said for your room, though; the canopies are on the four-posters for a reason. Be sure to take your "bedmate" with you: It's a pull-cart whose wheel comes off, leaving you with a cloth-wrapped bundle of bricks that have warmed by the fire. Undo the ties at the top and bottom to get two bags of bricks, then lay them on either side of you and you can go to sleep in warmth and comfort—until creeping cold awakens you just before dawn!

The food here is adequate and the stable care superior, but for the prices, something had better be!

#### Shaliber's Ship



This unusual accommodation is a leaky merchant cog moored more-or-less permanently at Bolliver's Wharf across from the foot of the Court Close. <sup>25</sup>A floating inn owned by Maerun Stoutbold, marine merchant, <sup>26</sup> the vessel was seized from Shaliber, a debtor who couldn't pay up. Shaliber is said to be scheming to get it back, probably by sneaking a crew aboard and trying to sail it out of the harbor, sleeping guests and all, some dark night!

Payment for a night's stay is in advance, but Maerun asks no questions of his guests. If you want to have a brawl in your room or carry aboard a bound, struggling captive, this is the place to stay. (By a curious series of ongoing coincidences, the chamberpots are usually emptied down the gangplank by the "enthusiastic hurl" method just as any Purple Dragon patrols show up to look in on guests.) The Ship is apt to be noisy and house nonpaying rodent guests, but it is not without its own seedy charm.

#### The Six Candies

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Situated in the angle where the Promenade (on the north), the Hunt Bide (on the east), and Mayhap Lane (to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>In the event of a siege of Suzail, it's agreed that Purple Dragons will be sent to defend it, so as to provide covering fire for sallies out of Eastgate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Court Close runs in front of the Winking Eye tavern and loops around to pass in front of the Court Stables before continuing south to terminate eventually at the docks. Bolliver's Wharf is located due south of the terminus of the Court Close across a short span of water. Shaliber's Ship is normally found here, although Maerun moves it if, for instance, he hears an inspection is about to take place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Maerun's trade sign reads "Boats bought, sold, outfitted, rented, and repaired. No job too big, no job too small."



south) meet, the Sixer, as Suzailans call it, can be entered on foot from any of those streets. Its stables, however, stand in the center of the block of shops and residences the Sixer is part of. They are entered off Windever Street, which bounds the block to the west. Once you've got to the place, you will find it a pleasant, large, and bright sleeping house. Its ample interior light is due to its many double-paned, well-caulked windows.

The dining room at the Sixer serves adequate fare, but it seems to be the permanent home of a variety of old men who are always to be seen sitting over game boards in a back corner. If approached properly, one can discover that they're all contacts for the infamous Saszesk.

Saszesk is a stealthy smuggler of both goods and people. Some rumors claim he owns the Sixer and lives in rooms somewhere in its extensive cellars. The cellars certainly do exist—I've seen them. I can report that the everpresent echoing of dripping water would cover a lot of other sounds down there.

The Sixer is a good place, whatever the truth about the smuggler. By the way, the Six Candles has no connection to the older Sixcandles Inn in Hultail—Saszesk seems to have chosen the name to confuse customs inspectors.

#### The Wailing Wheel





Situated in the southwestern angle where Windever Street and the Prome-

nade meet and facing the Horngate, the Wheel stands at the other end of the same block fronting the Promenade as the Six Candles. The Wheel is the quietest, least known of Suzail's large inns—and for good reason. It's always cold and dirty, the dining room fare is meager, and the service is almost nonexistent.

Still, prices are low, especially if you take the three-nighter, a deal which yields up a suite of rooms for 5 gp plus 1 sp more per beast stabled and per person (to cover meal costs). And the place is very well built, so you hear little noise from other guests snoring or celebrating in the wee hours. If you want cheap lodgings where you are left alone to sleep in peace, and you don't care about the food, or-gods look down-you like greasy stews, bland cheese melted over stale toast, and watery ale, then this may be the place for you. Its size means one can almost always get rooms on the floor and side of the inn one desires unless there's something unusual going on in Suzail, such as a fair, festival, or trade gathering.

The Wheel is owned by the merchant Thentias, a calm, calculating investor and landlord who owns *many* buildings in Suzail and in the Sembian city of Yhaunn. If you want to rent or buy a house, warehouse, or shop in Suzail, a simple word with one of the members of the Wheel's faceless, ever-changing staff<sup>27</sup> can bring you a swift meeting with Ramkzorn Sharlin or Alasgar Thurym, the two Suzailan agents of Thentias.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Thentias must pay poorly. Folk working at the inn don't seem to last more than a season.



## Marsember

Marsember, the second city of Cormyr, is older than the capital, Suzail, and far more decadent in just about everyone's opinion. A mist-shrouded, always-damp place of many canals, rotting wharves, and somber stone buildings clinging to islands linked by crumbling bridges, Marsember doesn't welcome visitors either by appearance or attitude.

Long an important fishing and smuggling port, "Misty Marsember" has a sinister, seedy appearance wholly in keeping with the unsavory folk who live here among the city's more honest citizens. Disguised mind flayers, dopplegangers, Zhentarim, Sembian slavers, and Dragon Cultists have been a problem for the authorities for years—as has corruption in local officers of the Crown, a tradition that seems to be continued in the current king's lord of Marsember, Ildool. The people widely distrust him, though local Harpers, war wizards (notably Kyler Blackbone) and Ildool's herald, Bledryn Scoril, keep a close eye on their local lord. Ildool, in turn, spends most of his time meeting with trade delegations from Sembia and other coastal lands of the Inner Sea.<sup>28</sup>

No one can prove Ildool is taking covert payments in return for preferential trade treatment, but he does seem to live very well in years when dock taxes sent to the Royal Court in Suzail are so low that one should be able to count the number of ships that docked during the year on two sets of hands. Marsembians bet openly and cynically on how long it'll

take Azoun to get fed up with Ildool and remove him. They also take odds on whether Azoun will remove him openly or whether the king's lord will simply meet with an unfortunate accident. If the latter happens, some folk say, it might be hard to decide which of Ildool's many foes did the dirty deed.

## Citizenry

According to the current tax rolls, some 46,900 registered citizens dwell in Marsember. Harper and war wizard reports put the real average at an estimated 48,600, rising to a summer high of around 53,200, which is the maximum comfortable capacity of the city's housing accommodations. These figures include some outlying citizens and many folk who try to duck paying taxes by simply not officially living anywhere. The figures fluctuate seasonally because of the many transient seafaring merchants who abide in Marsember and the many professional entertainers and others who serve them but retire to warmer places each winter-as the sailors themselves do. The citizenry is almost entirely human, though a few halflings, and even fewer half-elves, dwarves, and elves can be seen about town.

The citizens are watched over by a garrison of 3,000 Purple Dragons, and an Imperial Navy detachment of 12 major ships and their crews (in excess of 2,200 trained sea warriors) is also based here. An estimated 16 to 20 war wizards live in Marsember.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Notable among them are the city-states who dwell under the shadow of Thay. And Thay is yet another power Ildool is rumored to be overly friendly with.



## Defenders

The vital port of Marsember is more or less protected by Purple Dragons under the command of Ayesunder Truesilver, Warden of the Port. An honest, able man, he seems to devote more attention to keeping the ships and the docks safe and free of crime than policing the back streets and canals of the city.

Whatever the truth about the rot at the top, it's wise for the visitor to remember that Purple Dragon patrols are frequent during the day but almost nonexistent at night, and they are always more numerous the closer one gets to Starwater Keep, the fortress at the eastern end of the city. Purple Dragons can be summoned—in time, one hopes—by simply shrieking. They serve both as police and customs agent escorts, a role in which their diligence and integrity is unquestioned. Purple Dragons pole skiffs along the canals, armed with 20foot-long lawhooks for grappling vessels, docks, or flotsam, and gaffing those seeking to escape or fight. All local soldiers are good swimmers, and they wear leather armor with easily removable metal helms and breastplates in case they end up in the water. Soldiers are rotated into and out of Marsember every few years to cut down on possible corruption-or at least make it very expensive for a dishonest merchant to keep the police paid off.

The local Imperial Navy detachment is Cormyr's front line of defense against pirates raiding in the Neck. The detachment patrols the coast, guards the Navy dry docks, and trains approximately 240 recruits annually. The training is done using four old and leaky galleons. Ansiber's Wrath is particularly decrepit. It has sunk three times and been dragged up from the deep by means of chains. On another dozen or more occasions, it has barely limped back into port because every sweating recruit aboard was frantically bailing or pumping while their training officers sailed the old tub.

Most of the regular ships of the line stationed here are small, fast coast-boats, though two large and well-armed war caravels, the *Sea Snake* and *Thomdor's Fist* also call Marsember home. The visitor can easily recognize these two by the long, wicked metal rams low on their bows.

## Magecraft

Few mages call Marsember home, or at least, few residents advertise their mastery of magic. That's not surprising, given the actual or reputed prevalence of smugglers, slavers, mind flayers, and similar dangers to mages in the city. One local mage everyone respects is Delthrin the Deadmaster, a reclusive necromancer infamous for animating many undead to defend the city against a pirate raid. His abode is said to be guarded by many undead he created in experiments best not spoken about.

More public and approachable figures—though probably as well guarded as Delthrin in other ways—are the sorceress Filfaeril Stormbillow and the illusionist Vindala Chalanther. Filfaeril Stormbillow is a retired adventurer who makes and sells magical items and potions and has grown very rich doing





so.<sup>29</sup> Vindala Chalanther openly offers her services for hire, both as a spellhurler and as a tutor of would-be mages.

All mages who enter Marsember must register before the next sundown with the king's herald, Bledryn Scoril, or Lord Ildool. The lord just wants to know who's likely to be hurling spells about. He's been known to casually dismiss mages who come to him, especially those who openly declare themselves as war wizards.

#### Worship

A single temple stands in Marsember: Morningmist Hall, dedicated to Lathander. The sage Orblin of Hlondeth recently described this slim-towered edifice as "a bright light of hope in the dark heart of decadent Marsember" largely because of the energetic work of its leader, High Morninglord Chansobal Dreen. The Chanter, as most locals call him, is a shrewd investor in new ventures who particularly enjoys ceremonially consecrating new ships. A deadly foe of pirates and smugglers, he often sends his faithful out on hired ships to do battle with them.<sup>30</sup>

The city also holds shrines to Tymora, Umberlee, and (still) Waukeen. The shrine to Waukeen is very small and abandoned as a place worship, but is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Filfaeril is known to purchase rare or unusual monsters corpses or body parts from adventurers. More about her and the other independent mages of Marsember can be found in Appendix I of this guidebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Chansobal Dreen is a NG hm C12 of Lathander who leads 16 priests and 12 lay temple staff.



maintained by Lord Ildool for use as a moneychanging establishment as a public service.<sup>31</sup> There are persistent rumors that darker sea cults<sup>32</sup> meet in private in watery cellars and undersea caves that are reached by going down dark and dripping secret passages known only to the cultists themselves.

## Trade

Marsember is Cormyr's busiest port. Huge tonnages of goods from Sembia and points east are run in at its docks each year amid all the bustle of fishing and shipbuilding. Most of this began when Marsembian merchants scoured Faerûn in search of spices, a once-roaring trade that earned Marsember the name "City of Spices." Such trade has fallen off in recent years as other cities, such as Westgate and Nimpeth, vie for importance in shipping condiments to the Sword Coast lands. The uplands of Cormyr produce plentiful mustard of the finest quality, and Marsember has become the primary port for shipping this edible golden fire to distant Realms.

Surprisingly for such a damp place, Marsember is also a center of cabinetry and wood-carving, thanks to the settlement here, long ago, of several families of skilled carvers who were fleeing strife in the Old Empires. Pieces produced here are distinguished by their curved edges and spiral-coil legs and handles; no Marsembian piece ever has sharp corners.

Marsembian shops also produce perfume. This business probably began as a desperate attempt to offset the stink that hangs thickly over the city. As most citizens want their own water access to trade without paying the docking fees that reimburse the Crown for the costs of constant stone-hauling and canal dredging, the islands on which much of old Marsember stands are crisscrossed by a webwork of narrow, winding canals. These local sewers can only be politely described as "unpleasant." Their stench is incredible during hot, dry summers, and the heat of unseen things rotting in the depths keeps their steaming waters clear of ice even in the coldest winters.

Marsember stands on the west bank of the mouth of the Starwater River. Wise foreign sailors put in at Marsember to avoid Suzail's high docking fees or to let local vessels carry their wares inland up the Starwater through the treacherous Starmouth sandbars. Marsembian docking fees vary by the season but are usually 1 gp per berth. A ship too large for a 90-foot-long dockside berth must pay for two berths or anchor in the basin at a cost of 2 gp and then suffer the delays and costs of being unloaded by shuttle barges. 33

Both the garrison and citizens use small skiffs for transport through the canals and channels. Made of stout wood sealed with fish oil or tar, these low-lying boats are flat-bottomed, 2- to 4-feet wide and 8- to 10-feet long, and have upswept

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Since Lord Ildool does not seem normally inclined to philanthropy, citizens have speculated that the lights occasionally seen in the shrine at night mark its use as a secure meeting place for Ildool or his agents when meeting with less-than-savory characters.

<sup>32</sup>According to local legend, these include worshipers of Blibdoolpoolp, Sekolah, and other, more obscure faiths

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>According to local legend, these include worshipers of Blibdoolpoolp, Sekolah, and other, more obscure faiths that feed living sacrifices to giant lampreys and clams.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Suzail's fees follow identical rules but are twice as high.



gunwales so that either end can serve as the bow. A skiff is usually equipped with two long, hook-ended poles, two paddles or oars, and a canvas cover-tarp that doubles as a lateen sail when rigged on the poles. Leeboards (wooden side-rud-ders) are used when sailing. The water-logged condition of most skiffs makes them burn slowly despite their flammable waterproofing, but they sink rapidly if holed or swamped. The harbor shuttle barges are larger, better-built craft; aside from their use by the harbor stevedores, shuttle barges are also used by the Navy and merchants who haul things upriver.

Marsember is also a smuggling center, though this practice is not as rampant as it once was. Yarn-spinning barhounds in Marsember tell tales of lost full wine casks rotting under the water, fortunes in royal regalia from war-torn Tethyr hidden somewhere in Marsember for when a king shall arise again, and sunken slave cages discovered crowded with drowned unfortunates when warehouses were torn down. Despite Marsember's unsavory reputation, there aren't any known local thieving organizations. Between them, the war wizards and Harpers root out all actively dishonest groups. The Harpers, who use Marsember as a safe port for the movement of agents and folk they're trying to keep hidden, work hard to keep the city "clean."

## The Nobility

The noble families of Cormyr are largely absent from Marsember—or at least,

they keep their heads down when in town. The Thunderswords and Illance houses both have large, palatial homes enclosed in their own fortresslike walls here, but the Thunderswords are said to have purchased theirs-once the seat of the extinct Aurubaen noble house-to win themselves a private dock as an investment. By contrast, the Illance family has deep roots in Marsember and owns many properties through a complicated web of small companies bearing the names of others. It would be the height of folly to link this old, proud noble clan with persistent local rumors of ongoing slaving operations involving their Marsembian-based vessels and warehouses, so I won't.

Most noble families avoid Marsember as if it carried plague, which many Cormyreans fervently believe it does—and not without reason. Many locals are always pale, coughing and spitting often without a known cause beyond the handy but meaningless label of Marsembian marsh fever. Since the Janthrin and Aurubaen families died out (not, I'm told, of marsh fever), the only nobility of any local prominence has been the Scoril family, whose members have served the Crown loyally as factors, wardens, and naval officers.<sup>34</sup>

### Fashion

Folk go about the streets of the city in just about anything they don't mind being ruined by the ever-present damp. Cloaks and crotch-high boots are common sights.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>The current head of the family, Bledryn Scoril is the king's herald of Marsember. He continues his family's service—and perpetuates its local importance—by acting as the registrar of births, deaths, deeds, and tax payments, and the Crown's witness of sentencings and instruments of trade such as contracts, treaties, and promissory notes. Bledryn is a LG hm F4.



Fops try to keep their boots and gloves shiny to give the impression that they need not work and that what they're wearing is fairly new. (In other words, they want to show that they can afford to buy new clothes whenever the fancy takes them.)

The dashing fashions of Suzail are embraced reluctantly in Marsember. Those who admire court fads and things Suzailan too much are derided as "fancy noses" or "Crown-kissers" rather than decent working folk. Of course, many folk *elsewhere* in Cormyr won't agree that "decent" and "Marsembian" can both apply to the same person.

#### Fairs

Folk in Marsember celebrate the usual seasonal festivals, plus the Breaking and Dragonturtle Day. The Breaking is a wild feast<sup>35</sup> held to celebrate the arrival of the first foreign ship into port after the ice breaks up, and the celebration lasts an entire day and night through. The crew of the first ship in is toasted liberally, and the vessel need pay no docking fees all season long. Because of the waived docking fees, competition for the honor of being the Breaking ship means more than receiving a party and this has sometimes brought overly daring ships to grief amid floating ice.

Dragonturtle Day is the anniversary of the slaying of a gigantic dragon turtle whose lair made Starmouth a deadly area when Cormyr was young. Citizens are proud to show visitors what remains of the beast's shell. It covers the ceiling of a high-vaulted antechamber of the Ring's Tower. The seaward side of Marsember is a maze of many sandy islets bulwarked against the waves by piles of stone and forests of rotting pilings and linked to the shore and to each other by a network of low stone bridges. In the early days of Marsember, storms and high spring tides often swept away docks, buildings, and sometimes the islands on which they stood! Since the reign of Palaghard II (great-grandfather of Azoun IV), the Crown has paid for the annual dumping of cartloads of quarry rubble from mines near Tyrluk along island shores to guard the sandy soil against the hungry sea.

The mainland area of the city—or backshore, as locals call it—is a tangle of rolling cobbled streets and crazily leaning stone buildings. Both the weaving streets and the tilting structures are symptoms of the desolate bog underlying the whole city.

The Marsember Marsh (for which the city is named) once stretched along the shore for miles, haunted by lizard men and the far more terrifying creatures they fed upon. Then a great war broke out among the lizard men and most were slain. The dismal, almost deserted Starmouth area became the haunt of will-o'-wisps and worse things. Only a few fishermen and ferry folk dared to dwell nearby.

But the founding of a city here was inevitable. The Starwater River is free of rapids as far north as Redhand Pool in Eveningstar, though boats must be small and of shallow draft to reach past Mouth

A Look Across The City

<sup>35</sup> Elminster: Volo means "excuse to get drunk" here.



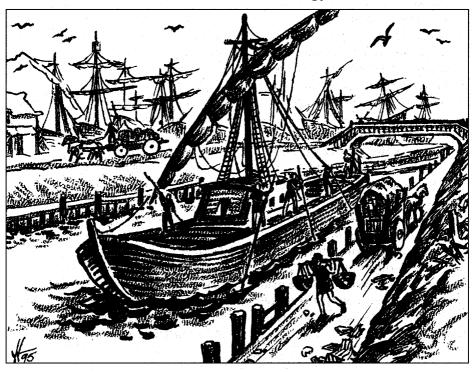
O' Gargoyles. Because of its length and accessibility, the Starwater provides the cheapest transport into the heart of Cormyr. As trade between the Forest Kingdom and older Inner Sea lands grew, seagoing ships unloaded cargo at the Starmouth onto small skiffs or rafts for the trip upriver. The Starwater route in turn brought logs and smelted ore down from the interior.

A ramshackle series of docks and precarious trestle bridges soon arose—and Marsember still has a ramshackle air about it. By royal decree all new buildings must be of stone, reinforced by stucco that must be renewed whenever ordered by local Crown inspectors. The use of cedar or slate on roofs is also required. Older wooden warehouses and boat sheds still stand, how-

ever, many visibly rotting and sagging into the water.

By night, beacons burn bright on the outermost docks and rocks of the city to prevent ships running aground, but the rest of the city is shrouded in darkness. Link lads can be hired to provide light, and their bobbing lanterns can be seen nightly, wending slow ways through the streets. However, the many nightly mysterious splashes and mist-muffled footfalls tell even the most inattentive visitor that most Marsembians active at night prefer the soft shroud of darkness.

This is in keeping with Marsember's sinister reputation. Across Cormyr, children speak of the city as the home of marsh monsters and may even shout such terms at Marsembians they meet. More chillingly, Marsembians tell tales





in their taverns of marsh monsters, too. Old Marsembians speak of will-o'-wisps knocking over bridge lamps in night fogs and posing as the lamps, then moving to lead the unwary into watery bogs.

Those who drown in the Starmouth, they say, return in undeath to seek out friends, lovers, family, and especially foes and debtors. Dripping they come by night to drag the living down to join them. Even hardened adventurers admit that strange creatures lurk about the Starmouth and that there is something fey about the murky canals of Marsember.

Yarn-spinners also whisper of treasure hidden beneath the murky waters. It is certain at least one of Gondegal's gold-laden payboats sank in the Starmouth. Marsembian elders also speak of skiffs full to the gunwales with elven gems that were scuttled in the canals by night to avoid seizure by Zhentarim. They also tell of Sissra, a half-elven princess who died in the city 400 summers ago. Her corpse was laid in a slim riverboat, along with gold, gems, and magic arrayed about her. Set afire, it burned to the waterline while drifting in the Starmouth. Its remnants have never been found, but many believe Sissra's ashes and treasure lie in the allconcealing mud under some old warehouse.

### Landmarks

The grandest building in Marsember is undoubtedly the King's Tower. It rises, massive and smooth-sided, from the northwestern corner of a castle on the shore at the western end of the city, looming above its own cobbled terrace

and dock, which form the largest public open space in the city.

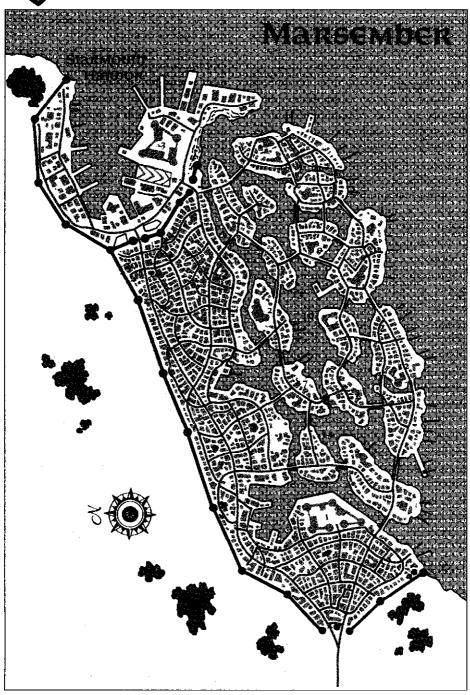
Trees in Marsember are few to none, and the streets don't have names—at least, not names anyone seems to use. Visitors must either wander or ask directions. Wandering is an activity best confined to the daylight hours, and Marsembians seem to enjoy making a game of sending foreigners—and Suzailans especially—on wild goose chases through the streets by giving them fanciful and distorted directions.

The islands do have names—several names each, depending on the age and wealth (or rather, haughtiness) of the Marsembian speaking of them. I was able to identify with certainty only two: Sharmran Isle, also known as Fishgut Rock, and Antanmaran's Isle, also known as the Prow due to its shape.

The only other buildings that catch the eye are the rosy walls of the temple of Lathander, Morningmist Hall, on its island in the heart of the city and the frowning ramparts of Starwater Keep, which effectively wall off the naval base from the rest of the city. The walls of Morningmist Hall are kept rosy thanks to continual faerie fire radiances.

Many grand private houses owned by nobles or rich merchants hide behind walls all over the city. I was able to discern the ownership of only three, and they're not open for casual viewing. Actually, all of Marsember seems to be like that: locked doors, no signposts, and a reticence about who lives where and does what. Accordingly, my coverage of city establishments is rather meager. Marsembians just didn't want to trot out the glories of their city.







## Mansember Map Key

- 1. The Ring's Tower (abode of Lord Ildool, the herald, and the garrison)
- **2.** Morningmist Hall (temple of Lathander)
- Starwater Keep (Naval drydock and fortress)
- 4. The Roaring Griffon (inn and tavern)
- **5.** The Cloven Shield (inn and tavern)
- 6. The Old Oak (inn and tavern)
- 7. The Barrelstone Inn
- 8. The Drowning Flagon (inn)
- 9. The Net of Pearls (shop)
- 10. Thundersword villa
- 11. Illance villa

- **12.** Stormwinds Towers (home of Szwentil)
- 13. Sharmran Isle (Fishgut Rock)
- 14. Antanmaran's Isle (The Prow)
- 15. The Drowned Sailors Society (club)
- 16. The Masked Merfolk (nightclub)
- **17.** The Wight on a Weredragon (restaurant)
- 18. The Platter of Plenty (restaurant)
- 19. The Tankard of Eels (tavern)
- 20. Shrine to Tymora
- **21.** Moneychanger (former shrine to Waukeen)
- 22. Shrine to Umberlee

# Places of Interest in Marsember Shops

Marsember boasts many wandering peddlers whose goods are available to those who know where to find them (in other words, locals). Most of them drink or snack in the dining rooms of certain inns, and if one doesn't know their routes, these eateries are the best places in which to find them. Several-notably a bald, fat man known as Earbos and a one-eyed man called (creatively enough) One-Eyed Naerdurr—seem to specialize in the sale of whatever cargoes have fallen off recently arrived ships. I'd not dream of openly calling such respectable businessmen fences of stolen property. I'll leave that to other tongues.

Marsembian shopkeepers who keep regular hours and open their shops are fewer. I've noticed that many bakeshops and hot fish<sup>36</sup> stalls just swing open shutters in their streetside walls and strike a gong to signal their wares are for sale—something anyone nearby who has a working nose usually knows already. Almost all such shops have a sideline, from recaning wickerwork chairs to darning torn clothing. This trade goes on through the same window as the food is sold through. Again, this system works well for the locals who know what the shop deals in and not so well for others.

I found only one shop in all of Marsember worth the visitor's time as a sightseeing destination and a useful source of needed goods:

#### The Net of Pearls

**Antiques and Curious Goods** 

3 3 3

The storefront of the Net of Pearls is not distinctive—indeed it's difficult to tell

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>This means cooked-not stolen-seafood.



there's a store at its location from the exterior. The interior, however, is a maze of hanging nets, crumbling figureheads salvaged from the bows of wrecks and lashed to pillars here and there about the shop, battered sea chests, and all manner of exotic goods brought from afar, from blown glass Thavan hookahs to carved odalisques<sup>37</sup> from the Old Empires. Not only is this a fascinating place to wander about and peer at things, it's the only place in all Cormyr I know of to buy Chessentan thespians' masks, old Purple Dragon arms and armor, and other items useful to the wayfarer in need of a handy disguise. Here one can also purchase seafaring equipment, from lobster pots to floats to weights-to the coffins so often sunk with weights.

The Net is run by a close-mouthed, sword-scarred man named Tannuth Ormbyr who's said to find and hire adventurers and mercenaries for clients requiring discretion. If you get him to talking about the old days of Marsember, he's a good source of lore. Ask him about more modern doings, and he shuts his mouth like a seashore clam and eyes you coldly. Crown agents are (sigh) everywhere these days, it seems.<sup>38</sup>

#### Clubs

Marsember has few clubs whose existences are openly acknowledged. I was able to find only two not concerned with shady dealings: the Drowned Sailors Society and the Masked Merfolk. The

Drowned Sailors Society is a smoky room where old salts get drunk and tell incoherent tales of their voyages, and it is not worth a visit.

#### The Masked Merfolk

\* \* \*

The favorite haunt of ardent Marsembians and visiting sailors and merchants alike, the Merfolk is a place where folk go to find other folk for a night of intimate entertainment. It has a dance floor as crowded and lively as any in Waterdeep or the cities of Amn, and some patrons come here especially to enjoy the company of the three known dopplegangers on staff. The escorts at the Merfolk all pass on information in return for small fees (typically 5 sp per message) and thereby serve as important communication links to most of the shady businesses operating in Marsember. The ability of the dopplegangers to change into the shape of someone else makes arrests by the Purple Dragons unlikely. There's even one tale about a doppleganger who escaped death at the hands of an adventuring band in an upper bedchamber of the Merfolk by emerging in the unclad and irate shape of King Azoun himself!

Nights at the Merfolk are enlivened by regular wine-tastings of rare and exotic vintages brought from all over Faerûn (for 6 gp per glass), contests of acrobatic skill, and performances by minstrels and singers of all sorts. While I was here, I saw a man who juggled knives while eating a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Elminster: Volo means statuettes of jade and ivory here, not living women who've been cut up or mutilated. Sigh. Language, my boy—'tis a delicate thing. Use it with care.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Tannuth is a CN hm F8. He has extensive legal and shady contacts in the city and in Sembia. He trades names and directions for gold pieces. He can also be hired by the very wealthy to come with a few sword-swinging but discreet friends to rescue (or hide) clients or their wares if they're caught, stolen, imprisoned, or confiscated by rivals or Crown agents in Marsember.





plate of oysters as he walked along a taut cable suspended across the dance floor at shoulder height. One leading local light is Elestra Blaebur, a sultry-voiced bard given to performing in elaborate and daring gowns. She plays and sings at private house parties as well as at the Merfolk.<sup>39</sup>

Visitors looking for the Merfolk are advised to follow any sailor who's doused himself in cheap scent and put on flashy clothing. Alternatively, seek the fourth building west of the landward gate of Starwater Keep, on the north side of the street that runs out of the gate and through the city. (This street is the only unbroken street to do so.) The door bears a striking relief carving of a masked merman and a masked mermaid embracing each other. It's hard to miss.

#### Restaurants

For decades, the restaurants of Marsember were the subjects of bitter, derisive jokes up and down the shores of Sembia, the Dragon Coast, and the Dragonreach. They're still pretty bad, though the less pretentious of the hot fish stalls and bakeshops are no worse than those elsewhere, but I found two places one can dine at without too much fear of immediate gut-poisoning.

#### The Platter of Plenty



The closest thing to a classy restaurant Marsember can boast is the Platter. This barnlike former warehouse's island location makes it an evening gathering place obvious to any visitor. The Platter is always

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Elestra is detailed in Appendix I of this guidebook.





warm, bright, and crowded, from when it opens at dusk until it closes near dawn.

No drink stronger than mintwater is served in the Platter, so drunkards and those wishing to soon become drunkards go elsewhere. Everyone comes here for the food, which can take some time to reach one's table. It may even be a trifle underdone because of the sheer numbers of diners clamoring to be fed. While you wait for your main dish, there are free baskets of rolls, garlic butter, cheese, fried mushrooms, and butter biscuits on each table to eat—if your tablemates haven't already swept their contents into belt pouches for later meals.

The Platter is owned by Bientra Whaelbuckler, a local eccentric of prodigious girth and strength. A meaty giant of a woman, she sails through the crowds like a large ship cleaving wherry traffic in the harbor. She has been known to eject unruly patrons by picking them up and hurling them bodily the length of a 25-foot table with enough force that they strike the door beyond hard enough to spring it open and deposit them, senseless, in the street outside. She's also been seen unconcernedly carrying barrels of salt pork on her shoulder that usually take three struggling stevedores to lift. Normally jovial of disposition, the fearless Blentra likes her customers to enjoy their food. She's been known to appear from the kitchens with a steaming bucket and a monstrous wooden ladle to dish out free second helpings. Her backslaps are legendary; she's broken men's shoulder blades more than once. 40

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>For more about Blentra, see Appendix I of this guidebook.

## Blentra's Oysters and Wild Rice in Mushroom Soup



2 fists<sup>41</sup> field mushrooms

3 fists morels or wood mushrooms

1 and 1 half-cup wild rice

1 fist of fresh shucked oysters (or

2 fists if in the shell)

1 quarter-cup flour

1 stick of celery

6 dice of butter<sup>42</sup>

1 half-cup zzar

1 cup stiff cream 1 cup salted fish

1 large onion

1 pinch salt

1 pinch pepper

1 pinch nutmeg

1 handful parsley

Do ye rinse and chop fyne all the mushrooms but 1 fist of wood mushrooms, which ye should hold aside. Then chop the celery and mix with the mushrooms. On a separate board mince the onion while warming a large soup pot in the side.

When the onions be done being chopped, heat the pot in earnest and melt three dice of the butter in it. Stir in the mushrooms, celery, another dice of butter, the onion, and the nutmeg. Stir-and-sizzle<sup>43</sup> until the celery be soft, then stir in the flour and keep stirring for six verses of a bawdy song.<sup>44</sup>

Then stir in water or, if ye have it, juice from drained fish or clams<sup>45</sup> until the pot is half full. Add the seasonings, washing them in with the zzar, cover, and allow to simmer (not boil) while ye crush the salt fish. When the fish is reduced to fragments, stir it in, then simmer for an hour or more.

During this time, stir-and-sizzle the mushrooms ye held aside in the last of the butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste. In another bowl, also whip ye the cream.

When ready to serve the soup, ladle it into serving bowls and cover with a lather of cream. Ladle the 'shroom juice, melted butter, and all-over the cream, and set each bowl before the customer.

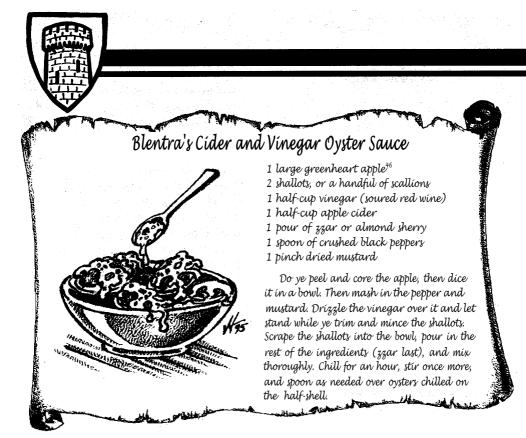
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>A measurement gained by the cook closing her hands into fists and pushing the knuckles together; though both actual fists are involved, both hands together make a single fist, so two fists here means enough mushrooms to occupy just a trifle larger volume than the cooks closed hand four time over.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Not to be confused with dicing (chopping) something, this measure, much used in Sembian cooking, literally means a cube the size of a cubic (6-sided) die. It is a rough measurement except in Selgaunt, where butter is often sold in long fingers marked for cutting into dice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>Elminster: Ye would say "sauté."

<sup>44</sup> Elminster: Ye would say a shade over two minutes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>Such juice is plentiful in the Platter's kitchen.



Blentra serves all manner of roasts, pies, and just about anything else that can be served on a platter—notably steamed vegetables doused in a variety of intriguing sauces. I record below one sauce she likes to drown raw oysters in. The amounts given in the sauce recipe make sauce to dress enough oysters to feed either one hungry man or Blentra, who prefers to eat only some of her oysters raw at a meal, sizzling the others in mushroom broth. At the Platter, huge cauldrons of this sauce are prepared by the lowliest of the cooks and kitchen 'prentices.

Many customers also rave about Blentra's oysters and wild rice in mushroom soup. I found it pleasant, especially with wine, and bought a crock to take away with me on the road (2 sp, clay crock with lid sealed with melted gelatin included). Served cold, the soup was even better than at first dining. I persuaded Blentra to let me publish the recipe in this humble tome, minus one or two ingredients she insisted on keeping secret. I've inserted it on the previous page.

#### The Wight on a Waterdragon



The name of this establishment comes from its huge but badly done roof sculpture depicting a mummified, clawed man riding the back of a bucking, obviously enraged fanciful creature that looks like a blue dragon with fins instead of legs and a row of fins down the length of its tail.<sup>47</sup> The sculpture's been erected

 $<sup>^{46}</sup>$ Elminster: The greenheart is a large green-skinned cooking apple. Ye would use a Granny Smith, though a greenheart's tarter.

 $<sup>^{47}</sup>$ It was carved in Marsember by Jathoom Berl, a crazed-wit who fancied himself a great woodcarver but (cont'd.)



none too tidily, to a ramshackle former fish-packing house with braces and anchor ropes visible all around it. The structure still reeks of its former occupation and like its roof sculpture is also a tangle of crudely nailed support braces—and just as makeshift furniture. The odor of the place isn't improved by the insulation: nets full of old sailors' clothes and salvaged sail scraps that are hung all around the walls.

Still, the place is warm against the damp. It is usually crowded—largely because it serves hearty food and good Purple Dragon and Shadowdark ale. The selection of wines is almost nonexistent, though zzar and a potent whiskeylike homemade distillation known as Harbor Bottom can be had for those willing to risk double the 1 sp per talltankard price of ale. Frankly, Harbor Bottom tastes like one would expect from its name.

The food consists of various roasts, sea pie, pâté whose ingredients it's best not to inquire into too closely, strong cheese brought from all over the Inner Sea, and a selection of sweet, tart, or hot sauces. The sea pie is diced marine life of all sorts, from skate to squid, all cooked to near-disintegration in a thick beef-based stew with potatoes and then folded into a thick, baconfatdough pastry shell. Don't ask jokingly here for roast rat; you'll get it.

Everything I ate here tasted good. I recommend the Wight for those looking for a rib-sticking hot meal who don't care about the origins of their food.

#### Tavenns

Marsember was once well endowed with what locals call watering docks, but almost all of them have now become inns as well. The chilly sea damp makes places that serve hot food with their drinks more popular. There seems to be only one "swill only" establishment left.

#### The Tankard of Eels

## !!! 0000

Despite its nauseating name, this ramshackle place is warm, fairly clean, and pleasant inside. The name comes from a long-ago bet wherein a half-ogre customer drank—well, you can guess. It's not a drink featured on the menu now, though one can get a respectable selection of ales and wines, 49 as well as zzar and a few liqueurs.

The Tankard is where folk come to drink and talk, not sing, brawl, or carouse. It's a good place to hear or overhear gossip, news, and tall tales of both the lands around and the seafaring life on the Sea of Fallen Stars. The Tankard provides no entertainment and not much to look at. It's just a room full of people talking like auctioneers in a hurry to be out of town—a listener's paradise.

#### Inns

Thanks to the transformations of its taverns, Marsember is now well supplied with inns, and all of them seemingly take in anyone, from orcs with drawn scimitars to mind flayers leading enthralled

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>(Continued.) became despondent after the display of the finished piece failed to win him instant accolades from the Court. He had fond dreams of a life of idly overseeing the carving of huge civic sculptures up and down Cormyr as the royal sculptor. He flung himself into the sea during a storm and was never seen again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Elminster: Used the way ye folk employ barbecue sauce and ketchup or catsup or whatever it's called.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>Everything offered by the enterprising Aurora in Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue, in fact.



human captives! None of these inns have long-term rental rates because most shopkeepers with a room to spare and an even greater number of homeowners rent out rooms by the tenday at an average price of 20 gp during the sailing season. (There are a *lot* of sailor's widows in the city.) Most of these people also rent rooms by the month between the Feast of the Moon (late fall) and Greengrass (early spring) for prices ranging from 20 to 50 gp (40 gp for most).

#### The Barrelstone Inn

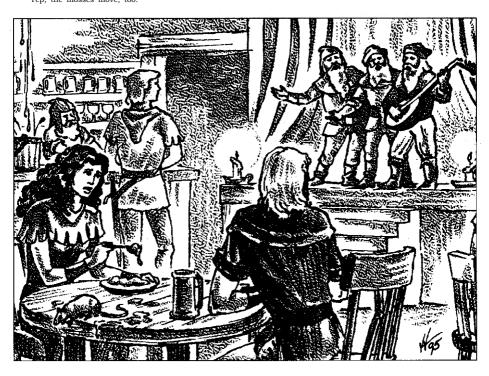
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The Barrelstone Inn is located on the first island out along the road that runs from the southerly gate of Starwater Keep toward the sea; the Drowning Flagon is on the next island out. Situated at a crossroads near the islands west end, this establishment has the distinction of being clearly the worst accommodation that Marsember currently provides.

The drafty, dirty Barrelstone is always cold. The roof leaks in wet weather; it's constantly dripping here and there—a melancholy sound to try and fall asleep by. Vermin and mosses creep<sup>50</sup> around the damp bedchambers, and mildew wafts in pungent reeks whenever one of the doors of the back passage, linking all the rooms, swings open. (This back passage is for the use of servants—or guests in sudden need of a hasty exit from the place.) The food doesn't quite taste of mildew, but it too is cold, damp, and generally unappealing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Yep, the mosses move, too.





The only bright aspect of the Barrelstone is the gnomes who run it. Apparently all brothers or cousins belonging to three or four large families linked by marriage, the 20 or so gnomes who infest the place are always telling jokes, playing pranks (thankfully on each other, never on the guests!), dancing about the halls, and making music-good music. If you want a snatch of an old ballad identified or something played for you, the gnomes of the Barrelstone are as good as any bard at it-well, any irreverent bard. To most travelers, however, the gnomes' musical ability is not enough to make the Barrelstone anything but a last choice of places to stay.

#### The Cloven Shield



This noisy ramshackle inn and tavern is more suited to drinking parties than sleeping the night through. Apt to be noisy into the wee hours, the Shield is known for armed brawls at late hours, which makes its sign of the war shield split in two very appropriate. The armed fights are due to the Shield's use by mercenaries, adventuring bands, and agents of the manipulative powers that sometimes hire them: the Zhentarim, various Thayan interests, the Cult of the Dragon, and others.

Restful is never a word that could accurately be applied to the Shield, but then the fee for a night's stay is low, and that's all that matters to some. Adventuring bands who want to sleep all together in one room can have one of the larger rooms to the rear for a flat 10 gp per night fee that includes stabling and a simple eveningfeast meal for up to nine!

## The Drowning Flagon

Occupying its own nameless (as far as I could learn) island, this former noble's guesthouse has grown over the years into a complex of stables, outbuildings, sleeping cabins, and—after a disastrous fire—separate kitchens and granaries. The main building, thanks to that same fire, now has a soaring central hall and two huge, grandly appointed dance chambers. These chambers are probably the most luxuriously furnished rooms in all Cormyr outside of the Royal Court, the Palace of the Purple Dragon in Suzail, and private nobles' dwellings.

The Flagon was once Marsember's best-kept secret, a place where locals met to gamble or could rent rooms for the private meetings of organizations such as tiny cults, the Aged Evening Escorts Benevolent Trust, and the Sailor's Onshore Investments Agency. The Flagon has rapidly grown in popularity due to parties held in its halls by various wealthy merchants seeking to buy themselves reputations. Now it's an overpriced inn. It costs far too many coins—7 gp per head per night!—to stay in rooms above noise and nightlong pranks, dancing, and carousing.

Yet it's a fun place, and most of it is too newly rebuilt to look worn or grubby yet. The Flagon is *the* place to hold a function in Marsember—an inn on the way up.

#### The Old Oak



The Oak was once a grand noble's house—just whose has long been forgotten—but is now sadly run down. Rotting paneling sags





away from the stone walls in many places, pillars lean ominously, and molds and mosses creep across a little more of the ornately plastered ceilings each year. The Oak is still, however, possessed of a large wine cellar and a rowdy regular clientele determined to drink it dry every night.

The food is bland and uninspired, but it is safe, I suppose. The rooms are cold and damp but spacious, and they offer good views out over the city. In short, you don't get much of quality, but then you aren't asked to pay much either. Lodgings cost 2 gp per head per night, plus 1 gp if you want a private room and another 1 gp if you have any beasts to be stabled. Food and ale included in the price, though wine is extra.

#### The Roaring Griffon

5 5 5



This inn was formerly the Drowning Fish, a notorious festhall wherein many

patrons were doused with sleep-drugged wine to awake naked and adrift on a raft out in the choppy waters off the Dragon Coast with all their possessions gone. Although the establishment is now under new management<sup>51</sup> as an inn, rumor hints that not all of the escorts who worked here when it was the Fish are gone. However, the Griffon now strives to be a respectable inn.

Situated in the angle between the two roads that enter Marsember from the west, the Griffon backs onto the Archtower, which stands between the two arched gates. It is easy for any visitor to find, and it is careful to supply clean linen, candle lanterns, and warming pans in every room. Merchants have come to prefer it because of its location and the amenities it provides.

The owner who's made the Griffon such a success is Szwentil, one of the six founding partners of the Six Coffers Market Priakos and by far the richest man in all Marsember. It's said on the streets that he bought the Fish and turned it into the Griffon just so folk who came to the city to do business with him would have a decent place to stay. 52

Visitors often go to see his grand house, a fortress that's almost a palace, located elsewhere in the city. This miniature castle is notable in Marsember for the moss garden that rings it. The visitors may only look at the manse from outside its walls, however. Szwentil's never been known to entertain any visitors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>The management changed after one duped customer turned out to be an archmage with spells enough to get himself back to land and into a highly dramatic meeting with the proprietors (ah, now the *former* proprietors) of the Fish.

<sup>52</sup>More about Szwentil can be learned by perusing his entry in Appendix I.



## Arabel

The frontier city of Cormyr, Arabel was once an independent hold. Much later it was briefly the capital of the nameless realm ruled by Gondegal the Usurper King. It has always been a bustling waystop on the overland caravan route linking the Moonsea metal mines to the ports of Cormyr and the Sword Coast lands beyond. It's also always been a fortress against the perils of the nearby Stonelands.<sup>53</sup>

Arabel today is a booming, prosperous center of growth. Both newcomers to the realm and young Cormyreans<sup>54</sup> are settling in the lands all around it, making Arabel, as the only practical place where they can hire services, ever richer and busier. It's a city of opportunity that is still lacking many of the sophistications of Suzail but not consumers' appetites for them.

Often referred to as the Caravan City or Overland City of Cormyr, Arabel is dominated by land transport. It is a city of trading costers, warehouses, caravan companies, wagonmakers, horse- and bullock-traders, and merchant investors. All of these are ably governed by the ex-adventuress Myrmeen Lhal, the king's lord of Arabel. A note of warning to visitors: In most circumstances, it's considered an insult to call Myrmeen "lady" rather than "lord."

## Citizenry

According to the most recent tax rolls, Arabel is home to 16,998 folk in winter, almost all of them humans. When unregistered residents, farmers in the shadows of the city walls, and the garrison are included, the city houses an estimated 23,400 to 24,600 folk. Due to its almost total involvement with overland trade and its location on a major trade route, Arabel has a large seasonal transient merchant population, and its average summertime strength is around 25,600, which is at the limit of the comfortable capacity of Arabel's permanent housing.

Trade makes Arabellans tolerant folk. Only orcs and half-orcs are treated with hostility on sight, and all races save goblinkin can usually be found within the walls, though only half-elves are commonly seen.

## Defenders

The rugged terrain around Arabel has always aided brigands and monsters in mounting ambushes and eluding pursuit, so the city has always been a base for well-armed troops energetically patrolling the Stonelands. Despite grand plans and determined efforts on the part of many Obarskyr kings, the Purple

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>The Stonelands are named for their rugged, broken appearance. They rise in a great plateau above the fertile woodlands of Cormyr and are composed of heights of rolling moor land broken by deep, treacherous ravines and studded by rocky tors. The limestone southern verges of the Stonelands give way to bare granite to the north and west, rising into mountains north of High Horn.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>In particular, third and fourth children who don't fancy life in the Purple Dragons or being apprenticed in a trade unfamiliar to them are moving into the area. In Cormyr, the eldest child usually works in and eventually takes over the parental business, while the second child seeks a job with the Crown—usually the life of a Purple Dragon. This leaves only priestly roles or completely new fields for later offspring.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>Myrmeen is a good-natured but imperious, near-fearless NG hf R12 whose tale is told in *The Night Parade*, by Scott Ciencin (TSR, Inc., 1992).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>According to Elminster land reexpressed in game terms) a typical Arabellan Purple Dragon patrol of today is 40 to 60 F3s and F4s commanded by an F6 or F7. These soldiers are supplied with archers and *potions of healing*, and at least two priests and one war wizard accompany them. One to three apprentices usually also accompany the war (contd.)





Dragons have never succeeded in exterminating such perils and securing the north for Cormyr as far as the edge of Anauroch. In recent years, orc and mercenary raiding bands sponsored by the Zhentarim have harried travelers around Arabel so as to occupy Cormyrean troops, thus allowing Zhent caravans to pass north of Cormyr unchallenged.

Such raids continue, but with the annexation of Tilverton and recent settlements in the Redspring area, Cormyr's fortunes are on the ascendant. There are persistent rumors that Ring Azoun will soon mount the largest military expedi-

tion into the area yet, in order to clear and take the Stonelands once and for all. In the meantime, caravans ride into and out of Arabel under Purple Dragon escort.

There are actually two detachments of soldiers in Arabel: the Army of the East under the command of Baron Thomdor, the Warden of the Eastern Marches, <sup>57</sup> and the city's garrison, which obeys the orders of Lord Myrmeen. The two commanders are firm friends and rotate units regularly between the army and the garrison to prevent rivalries and to give everyone battle experience. (I'm told Thomdor, who outranks Myrmeen,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>(Continued.) wizards. Everyone is mounted on hill ponies trained not to bolt or take fright, even in the midst of spell battles. The priests, wizards, and commander usually have one or more useful magical items such as wands of magic missiles and wands of paralyzation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>The stout, bearded Baron Thomdor (LG hm F17, putting what Elminster tells us in game terms), is the king's cousin and a widely respected man. His Purple Dragons affectionately call him "Old Paunch." They are fiercely loyal and will die for him—as all too many of them have had to demonstrate.



is based in Arabel rather than being part of its government.)

Arabel's strong garrison is led by shrewd veteran officers who know the city well and are staunchly loyal to the Crown and to Lord Myrmeen. The watch, the garrison, and the army are all combined in one man, Thomdor's liaison officer Dutharr, who is in effect Arabel's chief of police. Visitors to the city are advised to behave: Oversword Dutharr<sup>58</sup> is a seasoned veteran who seems able to anticipate trouble—in particular, swindles, instigated riots, and the less lawful plans of adventurers seeking entertainment—and he tolerates no nonsense.

The garrison numbers 1,000, including the palace guard. Thomdor's army has a standing strength of 1,700, of whom around 300 are on road patrols or stationed in outlying wayposts at any one time. These Purple Dragons are aided by the local militia. Its maximum muster is 3,000. Militia members are trained in riding, arms, and formation movement but denied training in archery. The militia's standing strength is 220; active members form the watch. The watch, aided by war wizards and Purple Dragon detachments at the city gates, keeps the peace in the streets.

The vigilance of these soldiers and of the local war wizards helps make Arabel a very safe—if a trifle rough—city with no known thieves' guilds or the like. The war wizards more or less constantly eavesdrop magically to ensure that Arabel isn't infiltrated by the agents of any hostile power. (The Zhentarim never stop trying.)

Not counting fortresses such as High Horn, Arabel is the one place in Cormyr where unbound weapons are worn openly in public. So many residents and visitors have the right to go armed that the watch doesn't challenge anyone seen with a ready weapon. The city is home to a large number of mercenaries who provide bodyguard service to individuals, valuable items, or caravans. Rates vary widely, from as little as 1 sp through 25 gp per guardian per day, but you definitely get what you pay for. Only the best can charge high rates.

Prominent among these better hireswords are the Red Raven Mercenary Company, currently under contract to the Crown to scour the Stonelands. This task is taking them some time, and they're agreeable to taking properly chartered adventuring bands along on expeditions on an unpaid, keep-what-bootyyou-win basis. Led by the charismatic Rayanna Rose,<sup>59</sup> the Red Ravens are kept under close watch by the war wizards since Zhent control over them could lead to swift death and disaster for the citizens of Arabel. The ranks of these mercenaries no doubt also hold many double agents secretly reporting to the Crown.

## Magecraft

Arabel is home to the notable mages Jestra, Myschanta, and Theavos, and to the widely respected mage and sage Mel-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>Dutharr is a LG hm F11 who can call on several disguised war wizards among his bodyguard as well as some unspecified magical items of his own. He's thought to have served Azoun for years as a sort of undercover agent, hunting down Zhentarim and other troublemakers whose deeds endangered the peace and stability of Cormyr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>A hero of the battle against the Tuigan invasion, Rayanna is a LN hf F16. Elminster tells us she has hidden depths. "She's more than she appears at first. If ye'd like to know her secrets, ye'd best get to know her as a friend—not expect to learn all by reading a prying guidebook such as this one."



lomir, whom some regard as the foremost *living* authority on the prophecies and divination practices of humankind. <sup>60</sup> Any number of visiting mages also pass through its gates, and though the questions of the gate guards may be quite probing, Arabel tends to ignore the strict mage registration rules of Marsember and Suzail. Of course, this is because, some say, war wizards are using spells to peer into your mind the moment you step up to the gates to look in.

Suspicious folk—even known Zhentarim agents—are usually shadowed rather than challenged. In this way the authorities can learn as much as possible of their shady doings and keep Arabel's tolerant reputation intact. This practice causes minimal disruption of trade and the least spell damage to goods and buildings. In a city with more or less constant pack animal traffic, it's all too easy to frighten beasts of burden into stampedes and do real, widespread damage.

### Worship

Arabel has only one proper temple, but it's an important one. During the Time of Troubles, Lady Luck herself appeared on its steps and protected the city against the worst of the chaos that swept across Faerûn.

Tymora herself may not be seen on the streets of Arabel any more, but her highest-ranking local cleric is determined that Arabel shall not forget the honor she did it. Daramos Lauthyr, High Hand of the Lady, rules the Lady's House as if he were nearly divinity himself.<sup>61</sup> He has lost several unpleasant confrontations with Thomdor and Myrmeen over just how far his authority extends over those who follow other faiths but happen to dwell in or be visiting Arabel. Daramos stopped proclaiming the king's lord guilty of willful blasphemy only after Myrmeen called for a public sign from the goddess in support of her position—and received it.

Nevertheless, Daramos has ordered his 24 priests and 336 temple staff members to address him as "baron of Arabel," a rank he feels Azoun should already have granted him and which he demands of the Crown on a regular basis. He has also increased the fees his temple charges for healing, training, and other services to almost double usual rates. He believes citizenry awed by the memory of Tymora's visitation will pay such fees willingly, and he considers the moneys necessary to accomplish what he sees as simple justice and the furtherance of Tymora's divine will.

Others in the city have remained silent because, they told me, they're hoping the greed that's running away with Daramos will cause even the most devout worshipers of Tymora to get disgusted and cast him out. That hasn't happened yet, but Daramos has called on clergy of Tymora all over Faerûn to acknowledge his temple and himself as the most sacred and supreme of those who follow Tymora. Their reactions to his demands have been no more cordial thus far than the Arabellan Crown authorities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>Details of all these prominent mages can be found in Appendix I of this guidebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>Daramos is a proud, headstrong CG hm C11 who has only become ambitious since the visitation of Most Holy Tymora to the city. He truly believes he must gamble his exalted position on even the slimmest chance of seizing more power because that's what a true believer in the Lady Luck would do.



Doust Su1wood, <sup>62</sup> the retired Lord of Shadowdale who came to Arabel to further his devotions to Tymora some years ago, is gaining popularity among local worshipers of Tymora as a possible successor to "Lord High and Mighty" Daramos. He has not shown any personal ambitions, but he clearly believes his duty to the goddess is to preach and to pray, not to support a fool who's busily dishonoring both the post of high hand and the good name of Tymora.

The controversy surrounding the temple of Tymora and Daramos is the only major religious matter visitors must know of to avoid putting a foot wrong. Devout travelers are advised that Arabel also holds shrines to Chauntea, Deneir, Helm (worshiped in Arabel as "He Who Watches Over Travelers"), Lliira, Milil, and Tempus.

One of these shrines, the Harvest Altar to Chauntea, has gained many worshipers in the last few years as the lands around Arabel have been settled by farmers. A proper local temple to the Earthmother will probably soon be founded somewhere near Arabel but outside the city walls. Delegations to the Royal Court in Suzail from temples of Chauntea in Sembia and the Dales are known to have already proposed the construction of a fortified abbey for Arabel, but Vangerdahast is reported to have been reluctant to build a base that brigands could easily seize to menace Arabellan trade and that would then force Cormyr to sacrifice Purple Dragon lives to retake.

### Trade

The Caravan City may be ruled by the king's lord and house a large and active body of Purple Dragons. However, it's dominated not by the decrees and activities of the Crown but by locally based trading organizations such as the Dragoneye Dealing Coster, Six Coffers Market Priakos, the Iron Throne, Thousandheads Trading Coster, and Trueshield Trading Priakos. These far-flung consortiums, some operating all around the Sea of Fallen Stars and most of the way to distant Waterdeep or Amn, are locked in competition with long-established local merchant families: the houses of Baerlear, Bhela, Gelzunduth, Hiloar, Kraligh, Misrim, Nyaril, and Thond. Thousandheads is the most powerful coster. The socially prominent Misrim clan and the quiet, almost reclusive house of Thond are the most influential of the families.

Fortunately for visitors and citizens alike, all of these powers are interested in maintaining Arabel as a busy, tolerant, open trading city. If Arabel becomes too dangerous or unfriendly to trade, business will pass to more southerly routes and Arabel will become an impoverished backwater.

Recent setbacks in the power of the Zhentarim coupled with settlement in the vicinity have created a trading boom. Lots of folk are demanding the same goods that folk in Suzail can buy, and right now Arabel is awash in money and bustling with busy merchants. The diligent shopper can call on almost as wide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>A quiet, considerate man who's also a worldly adventurer, Doust Sulwood is a member of the famous Knights of Myth Drannor, as is his wife, Islif Lurelake. Doust is a CG hm C9 of Tymora. Islif, a more capable battlefield commander than many veteran Purple Dragon officers, is a NG hm F9.

Elminster, who furnished this information, says they both have useful magical items they can call on Instantly in any violent situation.



a variety of things to buy as a citizen of fabled Waterdeep. Up to half a dozen caravans arrive or depart in a day.

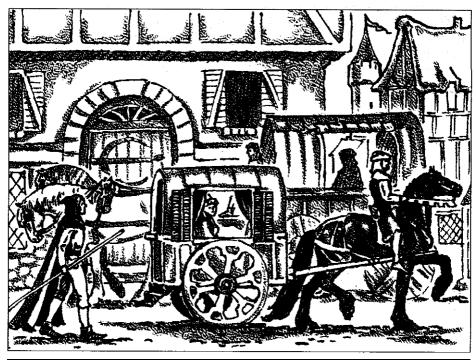
Arabellan merchants sell or barter coal mined in the Gnoll Pass area and increasingly in bell pits north of the city. The coal pits had until recently been abandoned for decades because of monster and brigand dangers. Miners are now usually guarded by hired adventurers or mercenaries.

The merchants also sell horses bred and trained locally, a dark stout Arabellan beer known as bitter black, a ruby red fine wine with a hint of berries in its taste known as Arabellan dry, and cheese. After being ignored for almost a century, all of Arabel's distinctive edible exports are becoming well known and increasingly popular abroad. The sharp, robust Arabellan cheddar is considered the best such cheese in all Faerûn, and it travels very well.

Arabel is also home to and a good hiring place for mercenaries. They tend to be well trained and equipped but expensive. Most bands are composed of a dozen or fewer members, but the Red Ravens can summon 110 swords onto the battlefield.

## Landmarks

The fortified city of Arabel isn't visually striking. 63 It's surrounded by dusty, aromatic paddocks and stockyards and con-



<sup>63</sup>A map of Arabel can be found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting box, the FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures hardbound, or the Cormyr game accessory.



sists of plain, forbidding walls that make the whole thing look as if it were a giant castle. The walls encircle a crowded array of small shops with rooms above them where folk live. These shops are pressed together along streets that are busy day and night and always seem to lead to rows of unlovely warehouses.

The only striking buildings cluster near the middle of the north wall. Largest and grandest among them is the Citadel, abode of the Army of the East. The Citadel is visible all over the city. No matter how turned around you get, you can't lose your directions if you keep one eye one it. It's a stark working fortress rather than a fancy, slim-towered noble's castle. In front of it, by contrast, is an example of. . . a fancy, slim-towered noble's castle. The elegant, sweeping turrets and conical roofs of the five-towered Arabellan Palace betray its showy design.

Flanking this oddly matched pair are the grandest nobles' houses. These smaller fancy castles are all walled, defensible houses in addition to being showplaces. Amidst these miniature castles stands the temple of Tymora, the Lady's House. In and around these homes of the mighty stand the only trees to be found in all the city.

The finest noble's home is probably House Misrim, whose walls are made of stone a-glitter with a gleaming white in color. Its varicolored shingles contrast oddly with the battlements of the Citadel beyond, which bristle not with silken pennants as the Misrim crenelations do but with espringales—the largest, newest type of ballistae with the longest range of any ballistae in use. To one who's never seen a grand house, the



other nobles' homes are worth a look, perhaps, but beyond Misrim's white walls there's nothing special about the lot of them.

The city does not offer any other splendor except a lone statue of King Dhalmass Obarskyr, excellently carved of black granite. Rising out of a waymoot in northwestern Arabel, the Monument of the Warrior King shows the crowned and fully armored Dhalmass waving a drawn sword, urging the unseen warriors of Cormyr behind him forward against some equally invisible foe. He's in the saddle of his favorite war horse, which is rearing to lash out at the air with its hooves. It is fine piece of statuary, and it is not diminished a whit by the use pigeons have made of its upper surfaces.



## Places of Interest in Arabel Shops

Arabel is crammed with crowded shops full of shouting, jostling people, busily buying the last one of whatever you came in looking for. Someone somewhere in Arabel is probably selling any unusual item you could think of, but there's nary a memorable establishment among them save for:

Elhazir's Exotica

Gifts

5 5 5 5

This pricey gift shop is all elegant display cases, carpets, and smiling well-dressed sales staff. All of the sales clerks are daughters of the proprietor. They seem to be able to smell thieves, and one of them is a powerful sorceress who always has a *time stop* spell ready to deal with those trying to leave with things they haven't paid for!

Elhazir's has a growing reputation across the Dragonreach for providing rare and unusual treasures such as dragonscale shields and wyvernskull bathtubs. Adventurers provide much of its stock, and rich Sembian merchants make up most of its clientele. Word is also spreading that the urbane, dapper Elhazir sells potions and certain special items, such as enspelled daggers and genuine dragon eggs, to discerning buyers. 64

#### Restaurants

Arabel has very few establishments that are just eateries. Instead it has broiler carts that serve hot food as they rumble up and down the streets. Typically, these carts sell hot buns filled with spiced meats or fish, cups of stew, zzar, and bitterroot tea. The carts also sell sugar, salt, dried fish, sausages, and biscuits. The city also has dining rooms in almost all of its numerous inns, and light food is served in festhalls, taverns, and nightclubs. There is one large, barnlike ex-warehouse, though, that serves meals day and night through to Purple Dragons, caravan crews, and weary shopkeepers or wagon loaders: a place aptly called the Hungry Man.

#### The Hungry Man



One doesn't go to the "Hungry" for atmosphere, genteel treatment, or decor. It's an echoing place of bare trestle tables, rough benches, and self-service lines. Payment is at the door: 2 sp for all you can eat plus 1 cp per tankard for rather watery ale or wine affectionately known as bullock juice.

The provender isn't anything to get excited about, but it's always available, no matter the time or weather. Attentive staff members keep the covered warming crocks full. Here's what you can expect to find:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>Elhazir is a CN hm M15 who protects himself with an earring of spell turning and an ancient, high-capacity Netherese ring of spell storing containing the spells invisibility, fly, wall of force, repulsion, and two priestly heal magics. He enchants the blades he sells. They are usually daggers +1 with one additional minor power. Some of these powers include the ability to feather fall when the dagger is grasped and ordered, the ability to emit light or faerie fire by silent will of the person touching them, or the like.

Elhazir's six daughters are all discreet, graceful, and well-dressed. I know only the names of three: Myrele, Chantra, and Illume. Chantra is the sorceress. She's a NG hf M17, though she doesn't betray her profession by her dress. I believe she wears an amulet that shields her mind against magical and possibly psionic prying and influence. Precisely what it is and what form it takes I'm unsure of. She does wear or carry something magical at her girdle, however.



- · Sliced roast beef
- · Roast mutton
- Spitted fowl<sup>65</sup>
- Milk porridge
- · Arabellan cheddar cheese
- · Goat's milk cheese
- · Hot bread
- Snowbread<sup>66</sup>
- Oatcakes
- · Pan-fried turnips
- · Boiled carrots, mint, and greens
- · Pried sliced potatoes in cheese sauce
- · Spiced flour dumplings
- Broth<sup>67</sup>
- Mustard
- · Grated horseradish
- · Garlic-and-parsley butter
- Brackleberry jam<sup>68</sup>

Large barracks kitchens in castles all over Cormyr (at High Horn, for example) have menus very similar to this, although they add venison and jellied eels to the bill of fare. Eating at the Hungry tends to be rather like watching pigs crowding each other at the feed trough, but it's a good way to see what caravan company workers, low-wage cargo loaders, jobless folk, and mercenaries are in town—and perhaps even hire them on the spot.<sup>69</sup>

#### Taverns

Arabel boasts many taverns, but aside from the one I cover below almost all are variants of the oh-so-familiar roadhouse. They are not bad but hold no surprises and nothing memorable: just another rowdy taproom with too-salty, too-thin stew, more stale bread and watery ale, and afterward another lumpy straw mattress. I rate most of them at:

## !!!! DOD

## The Dancing Dragon

The Dragon is owned by the famous gem merchant Peraphon of the house of Thond, who established it so he could get some measure of the tempers and characters of the adventurers he wanted to do business with. This place is infamous for its rowdy brawls. Even folk in Selgaunt and Mulmaster have heard of the wild, deadly punch-ups that erupt at the Dragon more or less monthly. Less well known is the Dragon's role as Arabel's hiring fair for adventurers, merce-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup>This fowl is grouse, quail, pheasant, and other ground birds. Domestic poultry, ducks, and geese are thrown in when hunters' pickings are slim. Hunters who come into Arabel with a brace of birds know they can sell them for 1 sp apiece at the Hungry's kitchen door, and a free meal is thrown into the deal.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup>Elminster says this is a sweet bread made with lots of molasses and nuts. The "snow" in the name refers to the sugar, flour, and egg-white sauce that is brushed or poured all over the loaves to give them a hard white coating. It is served sliced and cold or sometimes with a hot sweet sauce drizzled over finger loaves or slices from a larger loaf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>This broth is really a thick meat-and-gravy stew made by simmering the bones and meat leavings, straining the mixture from time to time, and thickening with flour. All meat cuttings and blood are simply stirred into this, as are all carcasses too battered to serve, plus frogs, snakes, and other small things not on the menu—rats and mice, for instance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>Brackleberry jam is the Cormyrean name for a jam made from the mixed berries of the woods and wilderness: gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, and the like. These are leavened with overripe peaches and quinces packed in sugar and brought to Cormyr's ports in ships from Chessenta and other warmer climes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>When important clergy visit the Lady's House for ceremonies of worship, Daramos has been known to send underpriests to the Hungry with orders to hire people for 2 cp (plus 2 sp afterward, if they behave themselves) as pew fodder to make his congregation seem larger and more fervent than it really is.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup>Details of this influential man appear in Appendix I of this guidebook.





naries, bounty hunters, guides, and the like. It's the reason so many ornery creatures of violence—er, action—gather at the Dragon in the first place.

People who'd like to hire a bodyguard or an adventuring band but who don't fancy a fist in the face or being ridiculed by braggarts or drunks trying to make a name for themselves can sneak in a back entrance and observe the goings-on from the safety of a dimly lit balcony. To keep the fighters from commandeering the tables up there so they can more easily hurl abuse, tankards, or hand cross-bow quarrels down on rivals below, drinks on the balcony cost double.<sup>71</sup>

Open offers of employment are posted on chalkboards at the doors and on the balcony pillars or cried aloud by runners on staff at the Dragon. Such a pronouncement usually costs 1 gp since the staff member usually has to endure a volley of hurled tankards, spittle, food fragments, and the like. Negotiations begin by someone communicating his or her willingness to be hired to a runner. The runner tells the prospective hiree to put or keep herself or himself in view of the balcony and the goes up a staff-only stair to the balcony to tell the prospective hirer. The staff member, who gets a 1 gp fee if a deal is clinched, runs up and down the stairs carrying messages back and forth until the deal is done. The Dragon's bouncers step in as witnesses to any deal.<sup>72</sup>

Those too drunk to fight are ignored

 $<sup>^{71}</sup>$ In other words, balcony prices are 6 cp per tankard for beer and 8 cp per tallglass of wine as opposed to 3 and 4 cp.  $^{72}$ These brutal warriors, known to all as "the lovelies," are actually a group of hired ogre magi employing their (cont'd)



beyond being dumped out of their chairs by others wanting to sit in them; they decorate the floor. All tankards and tallglasses in the Dragon are of fired clay, so they shatter if used as weapons. There's little more to say about the place, except that it's a great place to hear tall tales of derring-do and treasure taking as all the swaggering "fighting brothers" drink more and more and boast of their exploits, trying to outdo each other. One young sorceress said she and some fellow fancy-filled apprentice sorceresses go to the Dragon regularly of evenings, once they've mastered invisibility spells, to watch "gorgeous men swaggering."

### Rooming Houses

Visitors planning a long stay in Arabel can save many coins by taking rooms in one of the city's many rooming houses instead of an inn.

#### Shassra's





One of the best boarding houses is Shas-sra's. It is a clean, simply furnished but welcoming house. Shassra gladly houses adventurers, minstrels, and other less-than-respectable folk. She offers private rooms for 4 cp per night or shared rooms for 2 cp. Baths are 1 sp each, and no other amenities are provided with one's stay beyond a ewer of drinking water, a basin of wash water, and a chamberpot.

#### lnns

Arabel has far too many inns to list here. One can hardly turn a corner in the Caravan City without seeing an inn sign-board or three. What with all the competition and the city's traditional dependence on travelers, none of these wayhouses are particularly bad, so I've noted here only the most interesting.

Guests of the Crown are usually quartered in the Dragon's Rest guesthouse, not the Arabellan Palace, because of the *ring wards*<sup>73</sup> laid on certain floors of the royal residence. It's embarrassing to have wandering guests hurt by guardian magics.

#### The Elfskull Inn







This inn is named for the apparition of a floating, glowing elven skull seen in its entry foyer from time to time. It always appears during the hours of darkness but does not follow any discernible pattern or frequency in its appearances. The skull is of unknown origin, or rather is the center of so many competing tall tales that the truth is forever obscured.

Longtime Arabellan lore insists the skull marks the entry to a refuge created by the fabled Sword Heralds.<sup>74</sup> All accounts agree it was the safehold of a noble family, but just which now-vanished clan is in dispute. The names Dragonarl and Narboot seem most pop-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup>(Continued.) polymorphing powers to make themselves seem more human. They've been known to tear really defiant rowdies limb from limb, and they have orders to stop all fires and other activities that threaten the survival of the Dragon itself. They are at least a dozen in number, but it's hard to tell their exact numbers since they often use their magic to alter their appearances to avoid harassment from folk they've disciplined (who are trying to get even). Many Harpers suspect this clan of monsters of being behind swindles, shady deals, and even slaving in Arabel. They keep the lovelies under observation. The lovelies are known to make frequent trips to the Stonelands on their days off.

 $<sup>^{73}\</sup>mbox{See}$  Appendix III of this guidebook.

<sup>74</sup>See Appendix II of this guidebook.



ular. The tales all agree that the every-day trigger item needed to open the refuge is an acorn, that two helmed horrors guard the chamber one first reaches when intruding into the it, and that these animated suits of armor guard substantial riches.

The inn itself is superb. Minor magic keeps the richly paneled rooms warm in winter and cool in summer. These enchantments were set in place by anonymous mages hired by the owner. Local rumor believes the mages were war wizards looking to prepare decent accommodations for themselves in the city.

The owner and only permanent resident of the Elfskull is the sage Asheyron the Learned. He maintains offices on the ground floor, but he leaves the running of the inn to a highly capable staff led by two large, earthy, and capable siblings known all over Arabel as the Shrewd Sisters. Orlyra and Mristeezra are keen judges of character who usually anticipate what their guests will do and act with embarrassing effectiveness to foil shady dealings or attempted trysts. 75

#### Falcon's Rest



The Falcon is everything the Pride of Arabel should be: a quiet, cozy, luxuriously appointed inn where judicious shielding spells have been used to hush noise and quell drafts. The staff is discreet, quick, and considerate of guests' needs. A weary traveler often receives a warm cloak, a mug of broth, and a hot footbath

without even asking for them and before registering for a room!

Regular guests are greeted by name, and the staff members remember personal preferences and needs, anticipating when a hot drink or fresh wash water is wanted. Patrons who want to be bathed by servants are; those who prefer privacy are left alone. The call gongs stationed in every room here really mean something. Striking one brings a staff member promptly—usually within three breaths.

The lobby of the Falcon's Rest is dominated by a stone pedestal topped by a round stone ball. Atop it perches a glaring falcon, a masterpiece of taxidermy. In the rest of the decor, stuffed and mounted monsters abound, from rearing griffons to couatl kept aloft by magical means.

This inn is a must-see for folk who want to know firsthand what some of the more deadly and unusual beasts of Faerûn look like—or bits of them at least. The stuffed chimera in the second floor hall has ornate brass lamps where its heads should be. (No doubt the heads were destroyed by whatever frantic adventurers slew the beast.) The odd-looking coat and cloak rack in the lobby consists of the tail of a manscorpion (all poison removed) mounted horizontally between two ankheg heads that have been set so that they appear to be emerging out of the wall.

This plethora of beastly remains is due to the ownership of the inn. It belongs to the kindly, scholarly Elmdaerle, known as the Herb Man to most Cormyreans. Probably Cormyr's foremost expert on

 $<sup>^{75}</sup>$ Don't ask. Details of Asheyron can be found in Appendix I.



local flora and fauna, Elmdaerle is the guildmaster of the Guild of Naturalists, an organization he founded. He won't be found at the inn, however, unless he's come with a team of guild members to install a new monster decoration.<sup>76</sup>

All things considered, the Falcon's Rest is an excellent house, worthy of comparison with fine inns the world over.

#### The Murdered Manticore





The Manticore is a good place to go if you want to hear salacious gossip or participate in dealings less than honest or forthright. It is frequented by forgers, "arrangers," procurers, and other folk who dabble in or plunge head-over-heels into the shadier aspects of business.

That doesn't make it a bad place to stay. Such folk come here because the rates are low and the privacy high. The privacy is so high, in fact, because the Manticore is all tapestries and heavy closed doors and hanging silence, with nary a staff member to break it by his or her arrival, even if you ring the call gong in your room repeatedly.

The Manticore is a good place to be alone and at peace. Its rating would be higher if any food could be had. Drink is plentiful and is sold across the front desk only by the hand keg or wineskin. Earthen cups not worth stealing are supplied in every room, as is a stout bar that can close each door from within. But this only keeps out those who don't know about the secret servants' passages connecting with every room.

#### The Nine Fires



This establishment is a tranquil backwater in the bustle of Arabel. It is real value—a hidden treasure, one might say. Richly decorated and kept warm in winter by the large hearths for which it is named, the Niner boasts warm meals delivered to most rooms from the kitchens via dumbwaiter. Its namesake hearths are located at either end of its gigantic common room and at the ends of the halls on all floors above. They are tended throughout the night by the attentive staff. The Niner also staffs a resident firewatcher wizard armed with a decanter of endless water, a wand of frost, and appropriate spells to douse any blaze for the safety of its guests.

Most wondrous of all, the Niner sports a collection of well-used, battered books that are available to all guests. These are stirring but fanciful sagas of heroic swordplay and spellhurlings of the sort penned in Chessenta and hawked throughout Faerûn by the thousands. (The reader may well be familiar with The Nymph Says No or The Moonlight Morningstar Murders.) None of these books are useful as sources of lore, nor are they particularly valuable. Guests are warned that the resident mage can readily trace all of them by magical means. Those that wander are hunted down and recovered.

The Niner is owned by the famous local adventurer and investor Thurbrand

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup>Elmdaerle is a NG hm M2; Sage fields: zoology, botany. He loves to talk about the plants and animals of the wilderness of the Forest Kingdom, and he really knows his stuff. He can quickly and accurately prescribe (and sometimes even provide) herbal antidotes for sickness and even poison.



of the Stonelands.<sup>77</sup> He started it because he couldn't find a place to stay that was to his liking when he first made Arabel the base for his life's quest. His lifelong quest is to scour the Stonelands of every monster and lay bare all its riches and secrets.

Though Thurbrand has one publicly recognized house of his own in Arabel (and several others, whisper some folk, used to house various mistresses or shady visiting business associates), he still maintains a suite at the Niner for himself. Of late, the normally bluff and jovial Thurbrand has grown moody and begun acting strange—dabbling in weird rituals late at night, for example, and eating live toads. Some folk say his mind must have fallen under the sway of some evil mage or other powerful being. He's been heard to mutter repeatedly: "Those eyes! The phaerimm see all!"

#### The Pride of Arabel

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This is Arabel's haughtiest inn. It is a grand house of fluted columns holding up cavernous ceilings, with sculpted plaster scenes on every wall and ceiling, many large mirrors—and a snotty liveried staff whose members seem to spend hours preening before those mirrors. One of the mirrors is rumored to be a *gate* into a refuge created by the Sword Heralds,<sup>78</sup> though no one seems to know how to activate it and the staff refuses to identify it.

The staff's service is slow as winter honey, and the rooms are equipped with

grand, heavily gilded canopied beds whose curtains are very necessary. There's no heat in the upper floors, and in winter the rooms grow positively icy. You may even have to take your ewer of wash water downstairs to a fire to thaw it for use.

This chill allows you to keep food in your room without any risk of spoilage unless the viands can't bear freezing. That's a good thing, too. If you're hungry, food is a long time coming. Everything is cooked from scratch especially for the guest who orders it, so you have to wait most of a day for stuffed fowl or roasts!

Aside from these failings, the Pride is a splendid place to see and to be seen in since it occupies what used to be a noble's manor house. Many merchants take rooms here just to receive clients in or to meet with each other to hammer out trade deals in luxurious comfort. Drink service is both swift and deft, and the selection reveals a splendid cellar. I was unable to inspect it personally, though, due to a mimic that guards the entrance a trifle too diligently

Don't miss the spectacular falling stair at the west end of the inn. It's a delicately carved corkscrew staircase that hangs magically supported in the air and rotates slowly under the pressures of the feet of those using it. It hasn't fallen yet; the name comes from the fact that those not used to it feel like they're going to fall at any moment.

A stay at the Pride is not good value for the money. A single traveler can expect to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup>From what Elminster tells us, Thurbrand is a CN hm F8 of some 40-odd winters who found some fabulous treasures in Netherese ruins deep in the Stonelands early in his career. He has used much of this wealth to make himself an important landholder in the east reaches of Cormyr. Elminster couldn't shed any light on what's befallen Thurbrand other than to comment that he's obviously met with the phaerimm (detailed in FR13 Anauroch and The Ruins of Myth Drannor boxed set).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup>For what's known about the Sword Heralds and their refuges, see Appendix II of this guidebook.



pay around 17 gp per day, depending on his or her stabling and consumption habits. As the minstrel Glindlar of Westgate once described it, the Pride of Arabel is "for those with money to throw who want to make a show."

#### The Red Stirge



The Red Stirge is the best place in Arabel for the budget-minded traveler. As shelter, it's no more than adequate. There is nothing to drink but weak broth or mintwater and no food to be had at all, but at least the rooms are clean. The inn is usually crowded with down-on-their-luck laborers and merchants, hireswords looking for work or someone they can strike down easily and rob, and undercover agents of the Crown looking for outlaws, Zhents, other hostile agents, and adventurers who are troublemakers.

The inn's name comes from a tattered banner hung over the bar, the proud standard of a now-extinct mercenary company which once dwelt in this crumbling stone manor house, before it became an inn. It's said that the Red Stirge Company perished at the hands of overzealous apprentice war wizards after its members stumbled onto a way into a secret Crown armory somewhere beneath their house. This was a fully warded armory maintained by the war wizards and crammed with war wizard cloaks, battlestar bracers, armor, weaponry and enchanted brass hands that would unclench when touched by someone who spoke the correct password to allow the commander's rings they wore to be taken.<sup>79</sup>

The link between the armory and the inn cellars has since been blocked. The present-day proprietors, a large family of stout and placid humans by the name of Belargrund, are understandably reluctant to let any guests poke around underground.

#### The Weary Knight





This establishment is the closest thing to an average roadhouse inn that I've written about in this city's entry. It has good stables, straw mattresses that smell like they're made from used stable straw, smoky kitchens, and cheery greetings. I include it here for two reasons.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup>Details of these magical items and of full wards appear in Appendix III of this guidebook.





First, its name comes from an unopened, ancient knight's tomb salvaged from a church that burned down centuries ago. This stone coffin's lid is carved in the shape of a sprawled knight in armor, one hand on his breast and the other dangling down the side of the tomb as if he had just gone to sleep. The tomb is sealed with lead, and visitors are expected to leave it alone despite local legends that say the corpse within is encased in a suit of armor made entirely of gold.

Second, the proprietress of the Knight, Alanaerle, loves romantic tales and music. This fat, jolly woman, who is so ugly that her face scares children, gives half-price lodgings to minstrels and others who spin tales of courtly love, recite romances with happy end-

ings, or sing love ballads. As a result, a steady stream of wandering minstrels come here. It's a rare night that you can't hear lively tales or tearful songs in the large, low-ceilinged common room.

If such moanings are not to your taste, the parlor at the other end of the ground floor is by tradition kept for those who want to eat, drink, or smoke to the accompaniment of no more noise than talking. Suit yourself.

#### The Wild Goose

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This inn, usually missed by casual travelers, seems shabby and almost derelict from the outside. It's run by a kindly old man named Shult and his three daughters—robust, jolly, bustling and unstop-



pable whirlwinds of ceaseless energy who run endlessly about the place like charging boars, tidying and seeing to the needs of patrons. Standing in the shadow of the east wall, the Wild Goose is forgotten by most and shunned by Arabellans. One can usually find rooms here even when all other accommodations in the city are full. Shult has even been known to let folk sleep in choice corners of his attics and cellars—for slightly reduced rates, of course.

The rates charged at the Goose are a stiff 7 gp per head per night (plus 1 gp per beast stabled and 1 gp per meal), but Shult promises he can get almost any sort of item that'll fit along the passages delivered to a patron's room that isn't immediately dangerous to other patrons (such as a hungry lion might be).80 Delivery is free. The patron merely has to purchase the item for whatever price the vendors Shult can contact are charging-and the selection of available goods is truly staggering. Adventurers have been known to sit in their rooms waiting for crutches fashioned to conceal swords whose silver blades have been dipped in particular exotic substances, or for beast

cages of particular dimensions that bear locks made to fit a key that the adventurers have provided.

Shult gets such items through his arrangements with Mitchifer, proprietor of the World Serpent Inn, which shares a dimensional doorway with the actual door of the Goose. Tales of the Serpent's dangers and of the weird creatures that sometimes creep out of it and into the city are what make Arabellans shun the Goose and what bring most adventurers here in the first place. Shult knows how to get into the World Serpent and sells the information on how to do so for 2 gp if asked about it.

Adventurers can, of course, read this information here instead. Those who aren't adventurers are advised not to try the process and instead to stay well away from the Serpent.

The World Serpent Inn is a house fully as expensive as the Goose and with ready access to as wide a variety of goods and services. It is said to exist in a demiplane of its own and to open via its many evershifting doors into myriad worlds. What I saw on my visit leads me to believe this may well be true.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup>Shult can arrange to procure on any item in *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue*, any known meal or drinkable, and any known monster or being that be induced, coerced, or caged into transport. This specifically includes items only found in a particular place on a particular world, such as the large green plovers' eggs eaten as a delicacy in the Flanaess in Oerth or the omelets garnished with gold dust eaten by certain decadent folk in Shou Lung. These items come, of course, through the inn's dimensional connections.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup>Elminster. Of course it's true, ye dolt. The doors are indeed portals that allow one to step directly from the inn to or from various planes. They allow dimensional travelers to avoid those violence-loving idiots of Sigil. The World Serpent was crafted long ago by the archmage Alaurum of Toril, his friend llyndele of the Arcane, and the illithid High One, Sharth. Its usefulness as a little-known back door quickly convinced certain divine powers that it had best be con trolled, so one of them who enjoyed constant congress with new and interesting beings took the name and appearance of Mitchifer and assumed control of the inn, decreeing it open to all.

By unspoken agreement, folk tend to set aside disagreements when they're in the Serpent. The powers Mitchifer can hurl at them may have something to do with that. He's not the only deity to be met in the common room of the Serpent, either. Many powers come here to relax, so good behavior on the part of visitors is highly advisable.

Most mages of power, when young and foolish, want to travel the planes and see what's to be seen. I suspect some of them take the adventurers' view of the planes as a sort of endless array of riches and toys to be seized and plundered at will so as to gain wealth and power back home. Most of them eventually perish in their forays or grow out of their hunger for planar travel; they grow up, some would say. But by all means see for thyselves. . . .







The Serpent is entered by passing under the signboard of the Goose to stand right in front of its door. Instead of touching the door, knock on an imaginary door in the air and call on any divine being by name. The only visible change that occurs thereafter is that the signboard changes from that of the Goose to the words "The World Serpent Inn" within a ring consisting of a mottled green serpent eating its own tail. For this to occur, the invocation must include a proper name of what sages call a power or demipower and the words "I" and "enter"; no equivalents will do. For example, say, "By the honor of Azuth, I will enter," or "In the name of Set, I enter."

At this time, the invoker and beings with him or her are actually in a dimensional pocket. They can't see or be seen by folk entering or leaving the Wild Goose by its front door. A war wizard who was quite suspicious of my reasons for asking explained the known details of this magical effect. He admitted it isn't fully understood by the authorities—by which he no doubt means the war wizards—but that it's definitely not the work of the fabled Sword Heralds.

Opening the door of the Serpent takes you into a dark, carpeted passage that seems full of eerie blue smoke or mist. Along its walls are many large, identical wooden doors. Those who look about keenly may notice that some doors appear or disappear or seem to drift along the walls from time to time in an endless, silent shuffle.

The passage opens into the common room of the Serpent, a large space whose distant walls are always lost in the mists. Light comes from fluted pillars here and there and from a large shaft of light in what is *probably* the center of the room. In the glow of that large shaft of light sits the ring-shaped bar. It is in turn surrounded by tables of drinkers—all manner of beings, from grell to neogi to mind flayers to beholders and worse!

Within the bar stands Mitchifer, master of the Serpent, who greets all visitors as if they're long-lost friends. He's a fat man with rosy cheeks, a long white beard, and a great booming laugh. I felt like laughing the moment he spoke to me, and I noticed that many beings he spoke with did just that. He seems to have every sort of drink imaginable, and he whisks them to outlying tables by means of a small army of scurrying gnomes.

One of these efficient little servants takes you to a room if you express a desire to sleep at the Serpent. Such escorts warn you, though, that all stays must be of no more than a tenday since "space is so short." Those who stay longer (I asked) find themselves left behind on a random plane—possibly without companions or belongings—as the Serpent melts away around them.

I recommend the Serpent for adventurers only. Many guests have begun unintended quests and forays of incredible peril there.<sup>82</sup>

#### Festhalls

Arabel has its share of places where those with coins to spare can get better acquainted with other intelligent beings, but most Arabellan festhalls seem, well, a little *frantic* in tone and crude in decor. The only exceptions I found in my diligent researches were:

<sup>82</sup> As described in TSR's anthology module OP1 Tales of the Outer Planes.





# The Baths

This lushly furnished bath house, wrestling gym, and beauty parlor is notorious among Arabellans of all occupations and merchants from Iriaebor to Tantras for the scandalous goings-on that take place within its walls. It's one of the few places in this busy city of trade, trade, trade and work, work, work where one can relax and indulge oneself in unhurried comfort.

Many fires keep the Baths warm, and the carpeted, tapestry-hung rooms are decorated in sensuous splendor. Exotic plants and ferns jostle for space along the marble walls. Anyone willing to pay the rather stiff 7 gp entrance fee can bathe here; a private tub is an additional 4 gp. For 2 gp on top of that an attendant scrubs and perfumes you, and for 3 gp more your clothes are washed while you're in the tub. (Repairs are an additional 2 gp.) Use of the exercise facilities is free, though weaponplay is banned. I saw several groups playfully wrestling in the hot mud tubs.

The spicy reputation of the Baths comes from the more amorous activities I saw taking place. Though the Baths aren't officially a festhall, there are no rules against guests enjoying each other's company or even befriending the bathing staff. Arabel is full of tales about riotous games involving adventuring bands or Purple Dragons on furlough, large numbers of guests, and games of blindfolded tug-o'-war or strike the dragon with the sponge.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup>Elminster says this is almost identical to our game of pin the tail on the donkey.



Occasionally such frolics spill out onto the streets and startled Arabellans are treated to the sight of shouting steaming unclad people scampering down the streets trying to catch each other. Sometimes the participants are not quite naked. Masksparticularly tentacled mauve mind flaver head masks, for some strange reason-and pink rubber dragon costumes are favorite frolicware at the Baths. Folk lacking their own fun wear can rent appropriate attire when they arrive. More than one criminal in Arabel's past has hit upon the rather absurd idea of wearing one of the more concealing masks furnished by the Baths while committing dastardly deeds such as stealing the jewelry of noble ladies from their bedchambers by moonlight.

Drink flows plentifully at the Baths, though there's no food to be had except occasional sugar tarts brought by generous patrons. The Baths serves wine, zzar, sherries, and liqueurs. You can even bathe in tubfuls of certain drinks if you have coins enough to pay for the filling.

The staff at the Baths includes skilled masseurs (and masseuses) and hair-dressers, one or two acrobatic dancers who've mastered some startling contortions, and several naturally friendly folk who've become very skilled at just chatting and setting people not used to bathing in public at ease. I recommend that travelers who want to quickly catch up on Arabellan gossip, find out where they can buy certain items, or discover where so-and-so lives ask for a rotund jolly man by the name of Maundygre. He loves to tell visitors such things as he soaps their backs.

Some highly skilled escorts also work at the Baths. The half-elven beauty Shalara comes immediately to mind. She keeps her extremely long nails sharp, though. I bled quite a bit into my tub, quite spoiling the sherry it was full of!

Some people definitely come to the Baths hoping to meet a future paramour. Others come only to relax in a hot tub, alone or with friends. One I met goes just so she can eat very messy foods that she loves involving tomato sauces and melted cheeses without getting her expensive and stylish clothes soiled. She slips into a private tub and eats them while unclad so she can wash off spills unconcernedly.

Folk who want to discuss business, hot gossip, or shady dealings are warned that the prevalence of marble walls and water in most rooms causes some curious echoes. Plans may well be overheard in an adjacent room!

#### Dulbiir's

## 5 5 5 5 5

This unusual place rents out finery and other costumes—from slave-rags to the tourney armor of the most decadent dukes of long-ago Tethyr—for the use of patrons and the escorts provided by Urtos Dulbiir to accompany patrons. In these leased outfits, they cavort together in the grand ballroom, the "dungeon" or the "garden," or, before all the gods, in the street outside!

Some patrons of Dulbiir's come primarily or even exclusively for the playacting rather than to enjoy the usual services provided by an escort. Mildmannered merchants can pretend they're scimitar-waving pirates, meek shopwives can don leather and pretend they're priestesses of Loviatar, and so on. Some of it's quite amusing to watch, and





you can even pay 5 gp per hour (or part thereof) plus the cost of drinks to sit in a magically shadow-screened booth and watch other folk having fun in their costumes. <sup>84</sup> The others supposedly aren't aware of your scrutiny. If you should need to leave early, no money's refunded, and there's a two-breath warning chime before time runs out just before the end of each hour.

#### The Lavender Lion

This well-known festhall has a rowdy floor (the Downstairs, or street level)

where folk can dance to bawdy tunes or watch others bowers dancing or pursuing other physical activities. It also has a floor of private rooms, the Velvet Floor, for folk who prefer to be more discreet. This dimly lit floor has curtains across its passages so patrons can't see very far when walking about. It is also equipped with a secret passage and stair to allow prominent folk to enter and leave unseen. There are rumors that several elderly nobles and senior Purple Dragon officers are regular patrons here.

In recent years, the Lion has opened a new venue in its cellars: the very popular Spiderweb Room. A captive giant spider

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup>Shadow-screenings are magical barriers that can be seen through clearly from one direction, but which from other side appear to be shifting, always-impenetrable gloom—even if someone standing behind one is accompanied by bright lights. Dulbiir wouldn't tell me which mage cast the shadow-screenings, but I suspect it was one of the local notables and that certain bower balconies I saw in some of the noble houses bore similar treatments. Such barriers do nothing to block the passage of sound.



spins webs in a large, high-ceilinged chamber and adventuresome couples can chase each other around on them. The spider is caged out of sight when the Lion is open for trade, though a small but vocal group of mainly male patrons has demanded—so far without success—the thrill of sharing the web with its unconfined arachnid maker. Ugh.

The Lion charges only for drinks in the Downstairs, and patrons must negotiate separate fees with the escorts. Rooms on the Velvet Floor are an extra 6 gp per hour. Chiming water clocks keep time in every room, and there's a ready desk of discreet staff members armed with wands of paralyzation who keep track of time and respond to distress bells rung by escorts. (These distress bells are buttons concealed in bedsteads and elsewhere around the rooms.)

The Spiderweb Room is 16 gp per hour and is cleared when time runs out. Unlike the rooms upstairs, those willing to pay more can't stay for as long as they want. Despite these strict time limits, use of the Web is sometimes booked as much as a tenday ahead.

#### The Moonlit Touch

## coded !!!!

This festhall and nightclub serves a truly impressive selection of drinks—generous quaffs, too—to make its money. (Patrons negotiate separate fees with the escorts.) Guests can dance about the club to the tunes played by a merry band of resident minstrels and pluck free food from platters servants constantly bring around. The platters always hold hand meals such as turkey drumsticks or deep-fried,

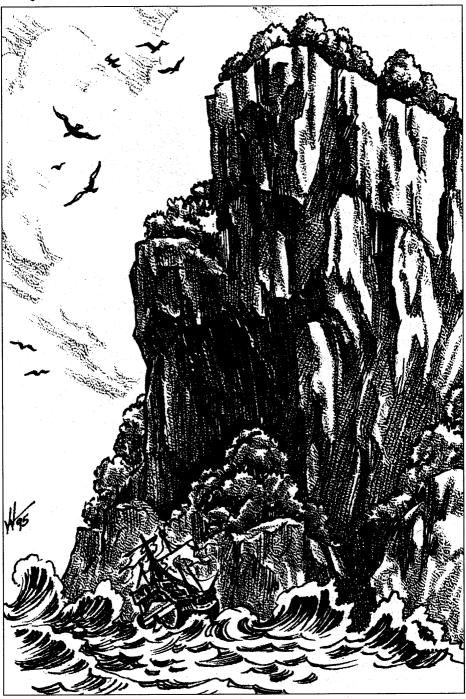


breaded and beheaded whole quail.

Because of type of food served, the Touch is apt to be greasy—and even hazardous when guests start to dance with candle lamps in hand. It is, however, a place where everyone always seems to be having a genuinely good time—from the couples seeking secluded corners to overweight customers enthusiastically pounding away inches from their bellies on the dance floor.

While it is apt to be far too noisy a place to conduct business negotiations, the Moonlit Touch is a good place to watch or meet people. There are even old men who come to drink and watch the revelers every night who are delighted to chat about Arabel's past or current city gossip. At least one is a retired high-ranking officer of the Purple Dragons, full of tales about treasure not yet found, Zhentarim plots, weredragons infesting the realm, and brigands who got away. Buying him a drink also gets you an evening of vivid entertainment. The Touch is definitely a recommended spot.







# The Coast



he longest-settled, most pastoral part of the Forest Kingdom is the coastal farmland between the Starwater River and the

Vast Swamp.<sup>1</sup> Different folk have applied the term *the coast* to different places over the years. I've defined it as all of Cormyr south of the Way of the Manticore (the overland road linking Cormyr with Sembia) between the Starwater and the Darkflow.

The inhabitants of the coast are a mix of farmers and fisherfolk, both salt and freshwater. Clams and eels dragged from the Starwater by the freshwater fisherfolk are held to be delicacies in this country, though most visiting palates find them to be too bland or fishy for their tastes. Piracy and smuggling have also long been quietly pursued occupations in the area. Although naval boats patrol the shore, there are many isolated beaches, inlets, and coves where smugglers can put in.

Visitors are advised that encountering smugglers at work can be fatal. Don't wander about near such places unless you've a good reason. If the smugglers don't get you, Purple Dragon patrols are apt to suspect you of being a smuggler and attach spies to dog your every footstep in the realm. This can put a real crimp in business negotiations, from deals with merchants to meetings with ladies who laugh of evenings. And it can earn one a permanent "to be watched"

notation in these soldiers' files. Consider yourself warned.

#### Hamlets

The coast is a rolling countryside of many copses, rubble- and stump-walled fields, and nameless, wandering dirt lanes that lead to small, unremarkable hamlets, vales, and villages that I haven't covered in detail in this book. For the reference of travelers, here are notes on a few of these neglected communities:

#### Battlerise

This hamlet is named for the hill crowned with a ruined castle that rises to the west of the Darkflow River just south of the Way of the Manticore. Monsters raiding out of the Vast Swamp and lizard men marauding up the inky waters of the Darkflow long ago reduced the population of this village to a few hardy turnip farmers and a lone waystable that stands inside its own palisade among the overgrown ruins of many abandoned cottages. There the Margar family trades fresh horses for weary ones or sells steeds outright to travelers on the road.

Several noble families over the years have had the idea of rebuilding the keep on the hill to be their own home and a base for trade with Sembia. All of them have given up after unpleasant experiences variously ascribed to smugglers, dark cults, or undead. The castle was orig-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Readers interested in details of the Vast Swamp (which Volo—sensibly, for once—didn't venture into) are directed to *The Cormyrean Marshes* booklet of the *Elminster's Ecologies* boxed set.



inally Battlegate, the seat of the extinct Auantiver noble family. The castle is widely reputed to be haunted. Recent rumors claim the Cult of the Dragon is using its vaults as a base and conjuring up ghostly dragon apparitions with hitherto unknown spells as well as animating undead human and monster skeletons and zombies to keep people away from the castle.

#### Blustich

Blustich is a small village located on the west bank of the Wyvernflow, where Hermit's Wood comes down to meet the river. Its folk live by fishing, hunting in the woods, and farming. They are known for their windraising dances, which conjure up gales strong enough to bring down hickory nuts from the trees on the edge of the Wood by the basketful. Travelers find naught else of interest here.

#### Dreamer's Rock

Dreamer's Rock is a landmark on the north side of the Way of the Manticore. This long, flat-topped hill ends in a south-facing cliff and shelters a small hamlet from the worst lake storms. Folk here live by herding sheep, growing small plots of vegetables that they surround with stake-filled ditches to keep deer and other grazing predators at bay, and scratching small caves out of the lee of Dreamer's Rock to get soft copper out of its rock.

From time to time, these shallow caves are used by beasts that locals slay for food or to be rid of their predations. The caves are also used by outlaws on the run, travelers caught by foul weather, and smugglers. The smugglers often pay

local folk handsomely for the use of a private cave, but they sometimes murder the locals they paid later to silence any chance of betrayal.

Most locals lack the skill or means to work the copper and sell it to passing merchants in lump form. To an inhabitant of Dreamer's Rock, a gold piece is a *lot* of money. Some don't see more than 5 gp's worth of coin in an entire year.

The rock's name comes from its use by the long-ago elven mystic Ilyndrathyl the Dreamer. He was often seen levitating above its summit, sitting on empty air and facing into the full fury of a sea storm while oblivious to its howlings. During these meditations his mind was said to roam the far corners of Faerûn—and distant planes, too. He disappeared one afternoon in a midair burst of flame. Locals believe some *thing* evil realized he was observing it and casually destroyed him.

#### GORTHIN

This little-known hamlet lies north of Kirinwood amid the bogs that are the source of the Evenbrook, the west branch of the River Mistwater. (The east branch, which flows through Kirinwood, is named Kirinar Stream.) Gorthin is a desolate place of stunted trees, rocky ridges, mist, and bramble bushes. Here simple folk eke out a living herding sheep and gathering berries in the bogs. Beware the local druids, who guard the community's privacy with spells that hurl thorns or create walls of them.

Like Dreamer's Rock, Gorthin is a desperately poor place. It is a seldom-visited backwater whose folk barely know what realm they're in or who's their king. The place is not worth a side trip, even



though rumors persist of gems being found in the rock ridges all around Gorthin. There's also a legend that Gorthin, the hamlet's namesake, wasn't a founding farmer but a long-ago dwarven king whose fabulously rich tomb lies beneath the hamlet. However, no one's ever found any trace of it.

#### Kallamarn

Kallamarn, named for an early settler, is a tiny farming village on the bank of the Starwater at the rapids southwest of Gladehap. It consists of only a cluster of produce sheds around the towpath where barges are walked past the rapids. It can be seen from afar by the tripod timbers used as rope anchors by the bargemen.

In truth, there's little else to see here, though the remnants of an orchard straggle along the banks. Its fruit, Kallamarn Catsheads, are huge green apples that were once favored in the markets of Suzail. They can be made into very tart pies and are free for the picking, but travelers are hereby warned that every year some applepickers are dragged down into the water by kelpies or other riverborne menaces.<sup>2</sup>

#### Moonever

This fishing village of 800-odd folk stands on the eastern bank of the Starwater River just inland from the river's mouth. Its folk supply oysters to many inland settlements. Their dripping ice carts are a familiar sight on the coastal roads of Cormyr.

Moonever is home to Hobble's Hooks (a fishhook factory), a cordwainer (a

ropemaker), and at least 20 netweavers. Otherwise, there's nothing to see here except rotten boats and rotting fish.

#### Nesmyth

This farming village lies northeast of Marsember among hills on the highest land north and east of the big bend in the Starwater River, where the river turns south to flow into the sea. As the treecloaked slopes around Nesmyth were cleared of their trees, the land dried out. Desperate farmers dug irrigation canals from the Starwater and built an ox-driven pumping tower, but the water drained away into the sandy soil, and the land remained parched. To seal the canal bottoms, the villagers brought in popper crayfish from the Wyvernwater, since the shed shells of these (somewhat) edible creatures dissolve into a gluelike jelly.

This tactic worked, but the crayfish not only devoured most of the fish in the lower Starwater, they also attracted electric eels anxious to feed on them. These eels caused many deaths among the villagers. Stelk, a cabbagelike shrub grown in Hilp as fish bait since all aquatic life seems to love its taste, proved to neutralize the discharges of eels that had eaten it for seven days or so. After the discovery of the fortuitous effects of stelk, the mage Harhansen of Nesmyth discovered that eel-shocked water from the canals-and only from Nesmyth's canals-glows like a continual light spell when poured into a glass vessel. He advocates selling light jars to enrich the village.

Nesmyth today is a community at war with itself: One faction of villagers wants

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Kelpies may be warded away by the use of hermit berries, which grow in Hermit's Wood, as described in the Monsters of the Deep chapter of the Coastal Aquatic Lands booklet of the Elminster's Ecologies boxed set.





to sell light jars, another wants to use stelk to continuously neutralize the eels and make the canals safe, and a third wants to exterminate the eels, abandon the canals, and change to farming crops suitable for drier soil—such as grape vines for winemaking. The factions disagree violently, and visitors are advised not to visit Nesmyth unless they have pressing business there. If you must go, don't mention eels.

#### Ongul's Water

Named for its small pond, this community fills a tiny wooded valley just northwest of Hermit's Wood, where a spring rises to fill a small, round, placid lake. The lake drains westward into the Starwater hard by a small wooded island known as Hunters' Isle. A grist mill run by a descen-

dant of Ongul, one Durkin, is the only industry of any consequence. The folk of Ongul's Water grow vegetables and raise ducks, and not much else happens there. A few brave locals hunt in Hermit's Wood and even hire out as guides to visitors who don't guess just how little of the forest these people have seen.

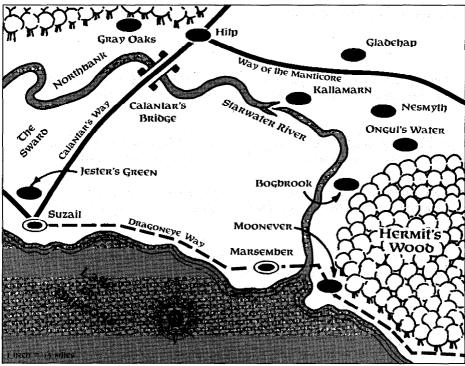
#### Smuggler's Stone

This isolated fishing village is named for a landmark rock that shelters the mouth of its tiny harbor, a harbor that has been used by smugglers to guide themselves in for centuries. It's now a crime to set lights out on the Stone. War wizards are detailed to farscry it from time to time so that a Purple Dragon patrol can be sent to intercept smuggling activities or pirate vessels quietly putting into the village's harbor to repair, elude naval ships searching for them, or reprovision.

Smuggler's Stone is a cluster of fisher-folk's huts straggling up the steep sides of a storm-swept cove. In high winds, the stilts that support the seaward ends of many of the houses creak alarmingly. There are many tales of hidden loot that pirates stored but never came back to reclaim hereabouts, and the crawl tunnels and caverns of at least one disused gnome mine underlie the hills north of the community, but there's little for honest folk to see and do here except buy fish.

The Stone, as coast folk call it for short, lies east of the mouth of the Wyvernflow. It is nestled in the cove sheltered by an east-facing point halfway between the mouth of the Wyvernflow and that of the Mistwater. The cove is shown on most maps, though Smuggler's Stone may not be.





## Bogbrook

This farming village of 800 or so folk is named for a spring that rises here to form a marsh and the brook that runs from the marsh to join the Starwater River. It was once so backward that its inhabitants were widely regarded as country bumpkins. More than one son of the village who went to Court seeking to serve the king ended up in the Purple Dragons with the derisive nickname "Lord Bogbrook."

Today, the village is well known for its splendid marrows and melons. They

grow in such profusion during the season that groaning carts set out in daily processions for the markets of Marsember. The village is also known for the raw, fiery black wine known as utterdark (or less formally as black Bogbrook water).

Made in the village by a closely guarded secret process, utterdark has an almost salty taste. Few enjoy it, but those who take to it can't get enough. There are utterdark fanciers aplenty in Sembia, Westgate, Amn, Chessenta, and even in distant Waterdeep. When used in a marinade, its powerful flavor can cover the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>There was a Lord Bogbrook some decades ago. He was one of those bumpkins who was ennobled by a Cormyrean monarch for loyal service in great danger. He vanished one night in his sixtieth summer while riding home drunk from a feast. Presumably he rode into a bog and drowned. His body has never been found—perhaps because it was weighed down by the splendid gold chain and coronet that he always wore, given to him by the king. The village is said to be haunted by his dog, who howls by night and leads unfortunates out into the marsh to their deaths in trying to get them to rescue his drowned master.



taste of spoiled food, and that and its potency make it a favorite with the quartermasters of many ships plying the waters of the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Utterdark sells for 1 gp per ceramic bottle in Bogbrook, and up to six times that in Waterdeep; it's 2 gp per bottle in Sembia. This ready increase in price makes the wine an easy source of coins for folk traveling east out of Cormyr—pick up a few bottles in Bogbrook and make a handsome handful of coins in Sembia. Utterdark is sold only by the bottle. Most traders pack a strongchest full of them, wrapping the bottles in blankets to limit breakage.

Various families in Bogbrook add their own secret ingredients to the wine to make their own superior utterdark. These ingredients are generally spices such as crushed mustard seed and the juice of berries from their own land. Why anyone would want to drink a bottle of something that smells and tastes of mustard I know not, but I suppose a cook in a large kitchen could make good use of such a commodity. Among utterdark fanciers, the vintages sold by the families of Jhalonson and Ittreer are respected, and a vintage sold by the Athantal family featuring a recently rediscovered seasoning combination is rapidly gaining in popularity.

Travelers find Bogbrook to be a wild, unkempt place of tall grasses and bogs. Muddy tracks weave and crisscross the marsh, and the safe paths are marked with posts. Leaning posts, it should be noted, denote a place where the footing isn't secure and the post is sinking away into the muck below. Folk and, more often, cats and dogs have been swal-

lowed by the bogs, but it's not a likely fate if the traveler stays on the marked paths and moves about only in daylight.

Amidst all this desolation stand the damp cottages of the villagers. Most are of stone roof with boards and turf and banked on the sides with earth planted with tomato vines and melons so that each house resembles a garden hill. Around each house is a melon patch and one or more cranberry bogs. Some families have little skiffs that they pole about in the wet. Using the skiffs, they jig for catfish, bog crayfish, lunk trout, and frogs with hook-studded lines baited with nightcrawlers, bits of fat, and moldy cheese.

The only structures of any interest are the local inn and the crazily leaning tower of Thelgarl the Thaumaturge, a long-abandoned wizard's home. Thelgarl perished over a hundred winters ago, and his crumbling stone tower is said to be haunted; it is guarded by at least one gargoyle. It stands alone in its own dark pool, avoided by locals who don't dare approach to look for the magic within.

#### Places of Interest in Bogbrook

INNS
The Utter Inn

::: DDD yy

The name of this damp place recalls the utterdark wine served here, though the inn's mulled cider and warm ale—aye, it sounds horrible but tastes surprisingly good—are both better. Unfortunately, the rooms are dimly lit, cramped cages of mildew.



## Dawngleam

As the most easterly Cormyrean settlement on the water, Dawngleam is the first port in the Forest Kingdom to see the dawn each morning. This village of 800 or so fisherfolk is fast expanding as the Cormyrean Navy sets about establishing a base here for use against pirates operating in the Neck. (The Neck is the strait between the Lake of Dragons and the wider Sea of Fallen Stars that runs west from Dawngleam into Sembian territory.)

Dawngleam's name comes from a song by the Cormyrean minstrel Darbrukk Syndylver called "The Sun Comes Up Again." Part of the lyrics run as follows:

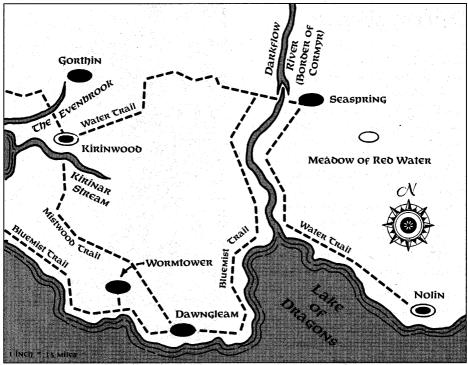
And so again I face the sun,
Setting aside a fading dream.
Another day's battles to be won,
I smile into the bright dawngleam
As the sun comes up again.

Dawngleam's lack of either large nearby onshore markets or a large, deep harbor, and the prevalence of lacedons and strangleweed in nearby waters, long hampered this village from being used as an alternative port to Marsember and Suzail. The arrival of the Navy has changed things. The docks have been rebuilt and enlarged, and two ballistae towers have been erected at either end of the them. Moreover, the continual presence of the Navy has cast a protective cloak over the village.

All of this has enticed merchants into considering Dawngleam a good place for shipping goods in bulk to avoid the crowding, delays, and high fees of Cormyr's two traditional ports. Sacks of grain milled and bagged inland and whole sides of beef slaughtered and smoked right at







the Dawngleam docks are now shipped in regularly in large quantities.

Dawngleam is a place to watch, a rapidly growing center that recently fought off its first pirate raid. Emboldened, it is now planning an expansion that should see it grow into a walled city, complete with a fish-bottling operation<sup>4</sup> and Cormyr's first protected clam beds. The clam beds are a joint merfolk and human venture involving a shallow cove caged in against lizard men and marauding sea predators. The fish-bottling facilities and clam beds are to be built by the end of next year, with a new shipbuilding dock coming into operation soon after that.

Cormyrean and Sembian investors alike are lining up to buy land marked to be inside the future city walls, and war wizards are watching over the growing community. Already they've uncovered and slain an adventuring band hired by interests in Westgate to poison the village's wells and sabotage some work on the docks. Buildings are rising by the month, and war wizard teams are busy casting spells to harden the mud of the roads into the dark and pliable hardwheel surface that's already replacing cobbles in Suzail and Marsember. Bright days look to be ahead for Dawngleam.

Before the expansion of the docks began, Dawngleam's shore consisted of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Developed in Chessenta, this new process preserves fresh-caught fish for transport and sale throughout the Realms by packing them in seasoned oils rather than barrels of salt and encasing them in earthen shells against spoilage. Wooden racks and crates guard against breakage of the fired clay shells.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster says the spell turns the mud into a rock and tar substance very like our asphalt.



maze of tiny rocky islets joined to the shore and each other by rickety bridges that were often swept away by the fury of fall storms. These islands made ideal places for picnic feasts, trysts, and other meetings where the participants didn't want any eavesdroppers to overhear what was said. They also made ideal anchor points for the builders of the docks. Dawngleam has, in the process of dock-building, lost the beauty of its scattered islets but gained a large and splendid giant hand of quays (each wharf a finger). The entire assemblage shelters the shore, where a basin has been dug out by magic so that the sand beaches of the cove can still be used for net fishing-at least until the clam hatchery gets going.

The islands-which were once covered by a tangle of pines and stunted duskwood and felsul trees-may have been altered beyond recognition, but locals report that an ancient magic appears to have survived the building. Local lore holds that in olden times there was a citadel of sorcerers, Soond Sharr, at Dawngleam. It was founded by an elven mage who hoped to be able to control human incursions into the future Cormyr by training a fellowship of elven, half-elven, and human mages to believe that humans should settle in the grasslands. The forests would be left as untouched as possible and become hunting preserves administered by the elves and by the Soond.6

This dream had glorious beginnings but soon perished in blood and fire. The islands are those parts of the citadel's foundations that were strengthened by magic. They survived the pounding of the waves after a dragon tore apart the castle above them to devour the mages within and make off with their magic and riches.

Part of the enchantments remaining on the islets enable any being who says the words "mother bridge" at the right spots—precise locations, I'm told—on any of the islands to awaken dormant magic and cause a ghostly bridge to fade into view. The enchantment works even though the key places are built over, and it allows the awakener and any being touching him or her to cross the bridge to wherever it leads—the next isle or the shore. Other creatures *cannot* cross, no matter how closely they follow, unless they know how to invoke the bridge into being, too.

Once a given bridge has been invoked, it can't be made to appear again until the next new moon has passed. Knowledge of this spell has enabled dueling pirates and smugglers to escape their foes on several occasions throughout the years. The ghostly spans are said to have also given the High Lady Alustriel the inspiration for the fabled Moonbridge of Silverymoon.

#### Landmarks

Dawngleam is still a small village. The only thing that strikes the eye beyond a charming clutter of cottages and fresh roads in a network leading to nowhere is the large docks, which are backed by a row of warehouses and flanked by a pair of squat stone ballistae-topped towers. Things may change quickly, but for the moment there are only three establishments of note in Dawngleam: one general goods shop, one inn, and one tavern. Foundations betray the future locations of several grander establishments, but they're but hopeful

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>The Soond were the fellowship. Soond meant land friends or land lovers, and Sharr meant hold or towers of.



dreams as yet. Still, we must all have hopeful dreams to reach for, or life becomes a truly aimless journey. . . .

# Places of Interest in Dawngleam

Shops
Argyr's Realmsry
General Goods

This large warehouse is crammed with everything from candles to cheeses and chairs to secondhand fine nobles' gowns and gloves. Locals come here to buy rope, food, wine, nails, tools, clothes, furniture, and all the oddments of life. The fat and surly proprietor, Austas Argyr, is a balding man with a pepper-and-salt beard and endless tales of how he was swindled out of great riches in Suzail and forced to leave town.

Austas knows many folk in Suzail and Marsember, and he will order anything requested from these cities by a customer who puts down a deposit of half the price. He is aided considerably in his intercity acquisitions by Crown agents who have been sent to help make Dawngleam Cormyr's newest city.

In a related matter, Argyr's been sending letters to Aurora for over a season. He hopes to become her outlet in Dawngleam rather than see her open up in competition. He hasn't had a reply yet but suspects her spies are everywhere. As a result, he will move heaven and earth in his diligent eagerness to attend to every need of any customer. By all means, take advantage of this. I haven't encountered as genuinely helpful—as

opposed to servile—a shopkeeper elsewhere in all my travels across the Realms.

## Taverns

The Maiden Danced at Dawn

:::: DDD

This is a damper, more windswept and cramped version of the familiar low-beamed roadhouse. It serves sausages, hot bread, cheese biscuits, buttered biscuits, and nut cakes at 4 cp per plate each, along with beer that varies from bad ale to better stout and bitters. Zzar—or some horrid approximation of it—and a small but good selection of wines can also be had.

This place seems to make its own brandy and sell it by the flask (5 sp). I saw six flasks consumed in as many breaths by local tipplers, so the stuff must be good or their palates utterly dead. The brandy is a darker red than ruby in color and is called (of course) Maiden's Kiss. Do all vintners and tavernmasters enjoy the same bad ballads?<sup>7</sup>

#### Inns

#### The Moondown Mooring

!!!! 666

Although this inn is a pleasant enough local hostelry, it is preparing for Dawngleam's coming golden days by raising prices sharply and whacking on a huge, drafty addition out back. Unfortunately, the new wing is built where the stables used to be, and even the dullest visitor's nose can tell it. Also, the proprietors seem to have emptied every dump and ruin for miles to get furniture for the new rooms. Still, the food's good—and hot, too.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster: Of course they do, lad. Don't ye know anything about life yet?



## Gladehap

This village of some 900 folk shelters in a little dell north of the Way of the Manticore. The dell is a tree-girt valley known as the Lost Lake because it was once full of water. The lake disappeared after a battle between warring mages shattered the rocks at the dell's south end, draining all the water—and the silver surlfish the mages were fighting for possession of—away to the little spring and meandering creek of today.

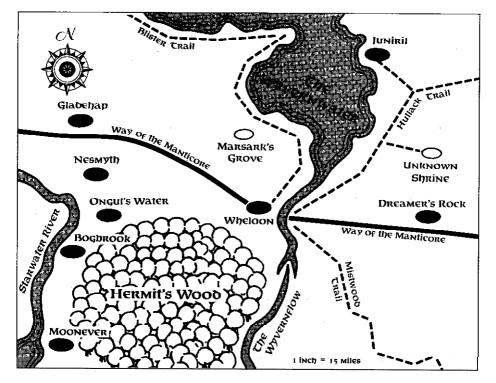
Today a happy, prosperous community, Gladehap is a refuge for many crafters tired of the hassles and high costs of larger population centers. It's a popular destination for shopping forays mounted by wealthy ladies of Suzail and for merchants bound to and from Sembia, who come here to

buy clever carved wooden toys, silverwork, aged cheeses, and furniture.

#### Landmarks

The houses and shops of Gladehap nestle among the trees on both sides of the dell, leaving the bottom lands to the winding creek, meandering brick paths (slippery in winter!), and parkland. Gladehappers take their highsun meals on the grass in the park whenever the weather is pleasant.

All faiths are welcome to worship at the raised plateau of Gladehap Rock at the north end of the dell. It's also the traditional site of all local duels and trials by arms. Two furious paladins of Tyr once fought each other up and down every one of the 67 stone steps that mount to it from





the valley floor before one of them was hurled off the Rock to perish in the stream below. (It's about an 80-foot fall.) His bones lie in the raised stone catafalque of Knight's Tomb that is located midway down the dell where the various paths that serve Gladehap as streets all meet.

The south end of this pleasant place is marked by the templelike spires of Chansa's Folly. The Folly is a false ruin built by a mad wealthy widow, recently deceased, so she'd have something interesting to look at out of her window every morn.

I don't believe the widow needed to go to all that trouble. Gladehap is lovely to the eyes and always alive, day and night. Cords strung across the narrow dell from pulley to pulley serve shops as washing lines and message carriers: Greased wooden tubes are hurled along the lines with notes strapped to them. The cords also serve local children and (after dark) the most acrobatic courting couples as a place to play or move about in relative peace. The endless traffic on these cords, combined with the various ornaments and toys, visible in the windows of the shops make Gladehap interesting indeed. It is a recommended stop.

# Places of Interest in Gladehap

#### Shops

I could write of half a dozen other shops than the two I mention here, but the skilled crafters of Gladehap have mastered the art of changing what they make almost overnight to suit the fashions and changing tastes of Suzail and Sembia. A shop might make lace dainties one season, ruff collars the next, and mirror-studded

finework tapestries the third. The visitor is sure to find items of adornment and household use of stylish make and good or superb quality in the shops of Gladehap.

## Barthemeir Needle & Nail Works Steelsmiths



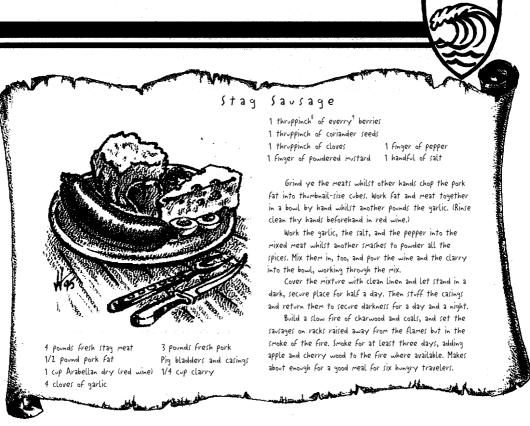
This smoky forge that reeks of oil clings to one side of the dell adjacent to Gladehap Rock, seemingly located as far from the other homes and shops as possible. In its many rooms the busy members of this large family fashion all manner of finely tempered steel items from the tiniest of bodkins to the best belt knives to massive spikes meant to be placed on castle doors, but they're so behind on orders that a visitor has to wave coins about to get noticed. When I looked in, the staff were fitting a series of polished armor discs onto a gown to make the wearer look like some sort of serpentwoman.

I couldn't take my eyes off the model. Finesmith Irgar Barthemeir's youngest daughter, Shaltara, is a stunning beauty. She told me that the long-tailed, smoothly articulated garment was destined for a temple somewhere in Mulhorand. She also warned me it was rare for the family firm to spend so much time on anything this large. To engage the firm on such a project, a payment of several thousand gold pieces would almost certainly be necessary.

#### Wyrmkindler Sausage Works

Sausages

The Wyrmkindler family hails from the



far-off isle of Ruathym. Folk in Cormyr often make fun of the family's raw yet lilting northern accents ("Yar?" "Yar!"). Mildly amused by this, the Wyrmkindlers keep to themselves, busily turning out various succulent sausages for sale in the cities of Cormyr and Sembia. Their wares are so good that their fame is spreading fast and far. I've even seen "genuine Wyrmkindler" for sale in Amn.

Wyrmkindler's best-selling sausages include Old Wolf, Best Hedgehog, and Long-Simmered Snake, but these names are deliberately fanciful and conceal the true ingredients. None of the flesh of the three named critters appears in Wyrmkindler sausages—at least, so they said.

The bluff, gruff family patriarch Aumagar Wyrmkindler would reveal only one recipe to me: stag sausage. He dryly advised me to get royal permission before I set about hunting the best stags in Cormyr (the Crown herds) to get ingredients. Hullack Forest stags will simply have to do instead for most of us.

# Restaurants Hot Highsun Handbreads

!!!! 0000

This unusual restaurant consists of a grand house that is all soaring ceilings, huge fireplaces, and bay windows shaded by artfully placed creepers and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>According to Elminster, this Realms measure (properly "threepinch") means as many berries, seeds, dried peas, or other loose things that the cook can pick up between the thumb and two longest fingers of one hand all pinched together.

<sup>9</sup>Elminster says everry is a bush whose berries very much resemble what we call allspice.





shrubs. Guests can wander through it at will, seating themselves wherever they please to partake of the fare, which is light in nature but of the finest quality.

Cream-and-fruit desserts can be had here in season, and butter tarts are available year round. The selection of liqueurs and wines overmatches that at many large and famous taverns, though there's no beer. (For beer go to the Bottle, described hereafter.) The main dishes served are all made of hot sliced bread spread with a variety of succulent things, from drippings to spiced crab paste.

Despite the restaurant's name, it's open from dawn to dusk. Locals like to go in the early morn, when the smells of baking breads are strongest. The halflings who run the restaurant, the Hotbreads, are punsters and romantics.

They're very pleased when courting couples choose to dine in their house, and they always provide extra touches such as flowers and wines for free.

I managed to procure a copy of a recipe for one of the excellent pates created in the Hotbreads' kitchens, which I have included at right.

## Taverns The Baron's Bottle

:::: 000

This place is a relaxed, rustic roadhouse where the service is perhaps a little *too* casual. However, one has plenty of time to enjoy the view from the taproom, which is stationed on the uppermost floor. This placement is unusual in a drinking establishment,



#### Rabbit Pato

3 pounds fresh rabbit meat 3 pounds fresh pork 3 pounds veal 1/2 pound pork fat 3 cups Saerloonian topaz

(white wine)

3 cloves of garlic

1 onion
1 handful of flour
1 pinch of pepper
1 pinch of salt
1 flamefruit rind
1 thruppinch of parsley

1 thruppinch of thyme

Dice the truemeats, to removing bone, gristle, and the like. Mix them together, and to this mix grind in the garlic and onion. Boil the bones and carcass leavings you took from the meat in the topax wine. Set it to simmer while you chop the parsley and thyme, grate the rind, and dice the pork fat. Mix all of these with the meat mix, and add salt and pepper to taste.

Add flour to the simmering stock, beat it in well, and then pour this mixture into the meat mix and stir the two together. fold the mix into a hooded metal pan, close it, set it in a metal bowl of water, and bake it in a hot oven for half an automatica.

Remove and unhood the pan as soon as it's cool enough to touch. Place Alat stones atop the mix and leave it for a night covered with clean linen in a dark, secure place.

but it allows a nice view down the dell—something to remember if you don't want to be seen.

The Bottle has always been owned and run by the Arcandle family, which owns over 40 farms west of the dell. It was renamed from the Arcandle Arms in honor of Baron Feredagh Obarskyr, the rollicking, lusty war leader of Cormyr during the reign of King Andilber Obarskyr (his brother).

Feredagh was famous for brawling and wenching, and his troops loved him for it. He also itched to get personally into every fight, and he led his troops rather than directing them. He was a bellowing, sword-waving, fat man with a huge red mustache that swept

out behind him as he rode in battle.

The Bottle was the baron's favorite watering hole, and he's said to have sired a whole generation of villagers by romancing his way through the local womenfolk. It is a measure of the respect and love Cormyreans felt for this rough giant of a man that to raise a child who looked like Feredagh was something to be proud of and not a thing that brought anger to the menfolk or shame to the family.

When the baron died, he bequeathed a bottle fashioned of gold to the tavern's owners. When they handled it in awe, they found it to be full of emeralds and rubies! The wealth and influence of the Arcandles dates from this time.

#### lnns

#### The Snowbound Hound

III BUBB

Picture an inn that looks and feels like a well-kept manor house, all carved wood panels, tapestries, and tiles underfoot covered with large and luxurious rugs brought from Chessenta, Calimshan, and Mulhorand. Fill it with canopied beds, thoughtfully placed hanging lamps, wardrobes large enough for lady escorts to hide in—and furnish those wardrobes with warm houserobes and the aforementioned escorts. Then invite me—please!

A delightful place, even if it's apt to be crowded (someone wanting real privacy may feel like they're in the midst of a large, endless house party), and lacking in food—but the Hound can provide warm baths and fires in chilly weather.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>As used here, this cook's term means don't include the pork fat.

<sup>11</sup> As Elminster explained it, this quaint measure equals about two hours.

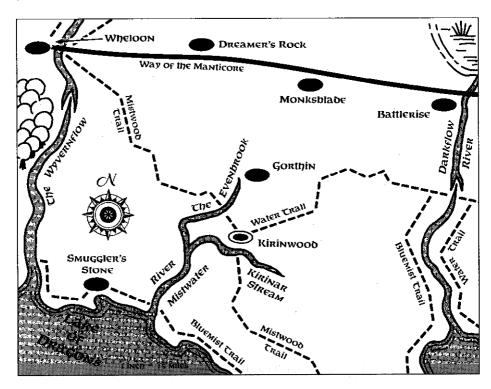


#### Kirinwood

This village of 1,200 or so folk stands on the north bank of Kirinar Stream, the easternmost of the two watercourses that join to become the River Mistwater. A busy farmers' market for years, Kirinwood is named for the tiny wood that rings it, sheltering it from the worst storm winds. The wood is home to a busy circle of druids, the Talkers to the Trees, who prevent uncontrolled woodcutting by heading up a band of foresters and supervising all harvesting of the forest's bounty.

As a result of the woods and the skilled druids that tend it, Kirinwood makes a lot of fern-and-mint wine, a green broth that clears the throat like an icy winter wind and tastes like chewing on spruce bark. Villagers here also make a fiery mushroom ale they sell for 5 sp a hand keg (and worth thrice that), and for the same price sell wagonloads of mushroom gravy in hand kegs. The gravy is eagerly sought by restaurants up and down the Dragon Coast.

The merchant traveler can also find all the usual farm produce here. Corn, oats, and wheat are brought to Kirinwood's three mills and thence to market in the center of the village. There these grains join eggs, alfalfa, poultry, and fruit. Kirinwood is in the heart of Cormyr's apple-growing orchards and also close to bogs to the west that yield bushels of raspberries and blueberries, many cleanly picked by the new gawl crawler





method.<sup>12</sup> All of this makes Kirinwood a great place to visit if you're buying food in bulk and of interest for its druidic forestry guidance. The only standout attraction in this admittedly picturesque village, however, is the Falling Tower.

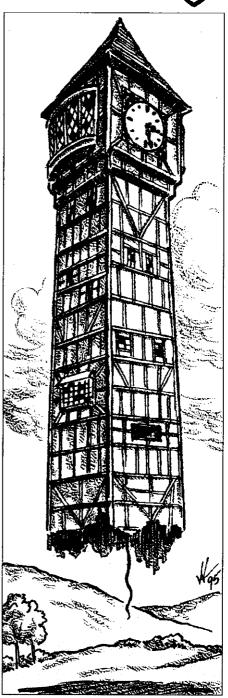
# Places of Interest in Kirinwood

## Unique Sites The Falling Tower

Perhaps this odd structure would be better called the "Tower That Will Not Fall," because it's been falling for centuries without yet reaching the ground. A large, square timber structure with alternating clock dials and oversized bay windows ringing its upper floors, the Falling Tower was once the seat of the Kirinar noble family. Ardest Kirinar found his home too remote from the cut and thrust of power in the heartlands of Cormyr and decided to gain influence by founding a college of wizardry and a brotherhood of wizards he could control.

This doomed attempt ended in a spell duel between ambitious mages that destroyed the college and most of its lesser students, the entire Kirinar family, Ardest's dream of a brotherhood of mages, and the ground floors of the Tower. It left the Tower's uppermost bulk floating aloft some 60 feet off the ground.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>The gawl crawler harvesting method is an innovation from Surkh on the Deepwash wherein hungry green worms known as gawl crawlers are set upon berry bushes after baskets have been placed under the branches. The crawlers eat only the stalks, leaving the fruit to fall into the baskets. This causes some mashed berries at the bottom of the baskets, but on the whole it ruins far less fruit than picking by hand and saves on work and wages. Gawl crawlers are raised in warm caverns and sold dormant in ice-cooled hand kegs at many farmers' markets.





Powerful magic has held it there ever since, though it sometimes drifts a little from side to side or turns slightly when struck by heavy flying creatures or strong winds.

From time to time, adventurers have explored the largely empty structure. Purple Dragon patrols visit it regularly to ensure no stirges or other aerial monsters adopt it as a lair. On several occasions adventurers have left behind a rope linking the lowest floor with the ground, and Kirinese youths have dared to climb up into the structure to explore and play. As a result, several rooms have been burnt out, and anything small, portable, and readily found has been taken away.

I say "readily found" because secret closets and passages are still being found in the Tower. Check every pillar you see, I'm advised. Most contain some sort of hiding place. In addition, somewhere in the dark, silently floating Tower is a *gate* allowing a being with the right trigger<sup>13</sup> to transport to the subterranean citadel of the lost mage brotherhood.

The battle that ruined the Tower is said to have consumed the combatants in devouring fire, so presumably the citadel hasn't yet been looted. However, mysterious floating severed arms and shattered weapons occasionally appear in the Tower, arguing that some adventurers are finding their way to the citadel and something is defending it against them. A minstrels' ballad sings of many-limbed snakemen armed with scimitars who can cast spells as they fight. As the song is recent and is the first mention of these guardians, they may well be pure fancy.

# Shops Galandor's Glassworks Glassblower and Lensgrinder

This small shop makes use of a fine white sand found in ridges north of the village to make glass beads, marbles, and small figurines. (Thieves buy lots of marbles, which they throw behind them to encourage pursuers to slip and take tumbles.) Galandor o' Galandor, the shop's owner, is a dwarf almost as tall and as fine-featured as a man; his family has intermarried with humans for some five generations. All of the living Galandors—a family loved and respected locally—work in the shop.

The Galandors' specialties are lenses that allow those of failing sight to see and small birds and other ornamental pieces that contain air chambers and holes that allow them to be played as tiny ocarinalike musical instruments. They custom-grind the lenses for thousands of gold pieces each, selling to the noble and the wealthy in both Cormyr and Sembia. They also sell off-the-shelf lenses in assorted strengths for 500 to 1,000 gp. The glass instrument ornaments typically sell for 40 to 60 gp each. An unnamed temple in the Vilhon Reach recently ordered 16 blown-glass dragons with channels through their bodies constructed so that incense smoke could be made to drift out of the open jaws and nostrils of the wyrms.

The Galandors' work is the best, and they provide a comfortable place for clients to wait and sip herb tea or mild mushroom ale while they wait for wares to be readied. Some beautiful glass wind chimes and hanging drift sculptures are placed around

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Legend says the trigger is a hawk feather.



this seating area to entice visitors to buy. An arrangement of glass blades of descending sizes exhibited here is particularly striking.

## Restaurants The Old Troll's Foot



This rather rustic, dimly lit establishment makes liberal use of ambulatory fungi for fighting on its bark-and-vine-hung walls and ceilings. The fungi are augmented by *driftglobes* that wander freely from grottolike room to grottolike room. Owned by Orbrar of the Talkers (one of the senior druids), this restaurant understandably looks like some sort of forest glade. Unfortunately its fare is dominated by agricultural vegetable dishes, from cold potato soup to spicy asparagus-and-artichoke bean broth.

Roast boar is on the menu, but it can only be had when boar meat is brought in from elsewhere or Orbrar agrees that one of the few Kirinwood boars can be slaughtered. One can get bacon and wild wood sausage, which use meat from the local market, but both are too heavily herbed for most palates.

The Old Troll's Foot also features a special dish that shares the restaurant's name. Troll's foot (it's not, of course) is simply mouth-watering, but it costs 5 gp a serving! The dish is actually made of a secret mix of forest roots, mushrooms, herbs, spices, vole meat, and beef from the most venerable cattle. If they follow my advice, most visitors will order it despite its steep price, along with fresh bread (not bad), fiddlehead butter (surprisingly good), and berry crumble tarts (a gooey-sweet blend of berries).

The ideal beverages to match this





repast are either firewine or glowfire, both available here. The firewine is astonishingly fiery. The staff members claim that in order to get this smoothly blazing strength, they age the firewine for a decade after they receive it before they agree to open a particular keg.

The Old Troll's Foot is worth a visit, anyway. Where else can you go and say that you've drunk earthworm-and-bark tea?

## Taverns The Unicorn's Pool

## :::: 0000

This tavern is named for a local legend that a family of unicorns regularly drank and dipped their horns into a pool at this site, rendering it identical in properties to a *potion of sweet water*. Though the druids assured me the legend is false, this is a superb watering hole nevertheless. I don't hesitate to recommend its curtained booths to the discriminating traveler.

A full selection of popular drinks is served, all at bulk prices (by the hand keg usually), <sup>14</sup> so buyers can entertain a group or take home any remainder in the morning—or whenever they're next able to stand. Persistent rumors tell of a mind flayer and a lich being regular drinkers at the Pool. Accompanied by capable, heavily armed human bodyguards to discourage anyone from attacking them, they can supposedly be found in their favorite booths most nights. I saw them both but must report a regular patron claims they're really mischievous dopplegangers. They invite folk to drink, and then they gather informa-

tion from the loose-tongued to amuse themselves and to sell to others for profit.

## INNS Daliver's Door

SSSS BBB

This pleasant place places a high value on privacy. The walls drink sound, and suites are arranged with little winding halls and closets to hide one entry door from another. These architectural features plus the low lighting make the place ideal for trysts and engagements with professional escorts, I suppose, but a maze for most of us.

If you're worried about spies or folk trying to do you harm, be warned that this place could conceal a small army of them, and I know for a fact several of the hall tapestries contain spyholes used by the staff. A fellow guest complained of giggles from an unseen source when he was entertaining a local lady in his room, so I'd not be surprised to learn that spyholes can be found in the bed hangings, too!

On the other hand, Daliver's is one of the few inns in the damp coast lands that I found warm enough for true open-shirted comfort in the winter. Moreover, the handsome host Daliver, a somewhat-retired adventurer, employs three tall, hugely muscled bouncers to discourage rowdy behavior. By their appearances, I'd say they have gnoll blood in their families' pasts.

As a result of the bouncers and the building layout, Daliver's offers exclusive and quiet accommodation to a degree seldom found outside of monastic communities; I enjoyed all of my stays.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue provides details of most of these drinks, such as Bitter Black stout, Dragon's Breath brew, Shadowdark ale, suzale, Arabellan dry, blood wine, Saerloonian special vat, Saerloonian glowfire, and Westgate ruby.

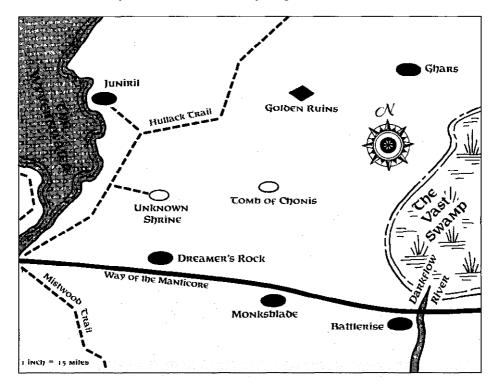


#### Monksblade

The name of this hamlet, strategically sited on the Way of the Manticore east of the Wyvernflow crossing at Wheloon, commemorates its past. The present-day settlement, a popular night stopover for merchants traveling betwixt Cormyr and Sembia, is built from the crumbling ruins of no less than four monasteries. Of old, Monksblade was home to holy houses dedicated to Chauntea, Tempus, Tyche, 15 and Umberlee.

The Watchers Over the Land were a rare militant order of worshipers of the Lady of Grain. Derisively called "strawheads" by others, they believed humankind couldn't survive in these savage northlands without plentiful food. This food would be provided by prosperous farms whose workers were well protected and had good roads to get their goods to law-abiding, peaceful villages and ports. From their base here in Mother Chauntea's House, the Watchers busied themselves establishing and enforcing laws to promote their goals. Their militant activities focused on maintaining road patrols. Their work did much to clear the coastal lands around of monsters that had been so numerous that they'd raided the eastern steadings of Cormyr more or less at will. However, the war-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Tyche is the predecessor to both Tymora and Beshaba as the goddess of luck, both good and bad. It is unclear whether she gave birth to the two goddesses who replaced her, as they are often referred to as her daughters, or whether she somehow "split" and transformed into two separate goddesses.





rior-priests of Chauntea suffered grievous losses in this ongoing battle even as admiration for their work was spreading and a patriarch of Tempus in the Vilhon reported that Tempus deemed the situation in Cormyr worthy of his aid.

The Red Knights of Tempus arrived in strength and made war on the monsters, clearing an ever-larger area for the Watchers to police. The Red Knights rode out of the Towers of War, a keep at the eastern end of the present-day hamlet. (Its ruins now house the popular Firedagger Inn.) Their success attracted a flood of settlers from Sembia and the Vilhon, and these folk brought two strong faiths with them: the worship of Tyche, Lady of Fortune, and devotion to Umberlee, Stormgoddess of the Seas.

The Followers of Fortune built the Lady's House, a fortified abbey at the heart of the gathering of holy houses. From there the champions of Tyche fared far and wide across the coastal lands all around the Sea of Fallen Stars. Known to all as the Lucky Knights, they were the shining-armored, noble knights errant whose exploits and wooings gave Cormyr its dashing, romantic reputation across the Inner Sea lands. Theirs is a legend that still shines brightly today, though the Lucky Knights are dead and gone these 300 winters.

The followers of Umberlee were known as the Worshipers of the Wave and dwelt in the House of the Seas, a sprawling, many-towered manor house built beside and around the Lady's House. Its wings and outbays stretched seemingly for miles, and most of the buildings a traveler sees in Monksblade today are fashioned from





them. (This original form as one conjoined structure is why so many of the houses seem to be joined or possess stables and covered sheds that stretch almost to touch the next abode.) The faithful of Umberlee spent their time making offerings to the Queen of the Deeps to keep coastal shipping and fishing as safe as possible. Empowered with magic that enabled them to breathe in the watery depths, they went twice a year to capture monsters of the deep to sacrifice in honor of Umberlee. The rest of the year, they crewed small, fast boats and furiously waged war on pirates in the name of their holy lady.

This unusual state of cooperative coexistence allowed the countryside and all four temples to flourish, although it attracted raid after raid from brigands, lizard men from the nearby Vast Swamp, and Sembian interests seeking to infiltrate and take over the monastic community. Eventually, these persistent forces succeeded in depopulating the monasteries, though it took centuries. After lying vacant for some years, the ruins were taken over by villagers sponsored by the Crown of Cormyr. The king did not have spare coin enough at the time to build or man an easterly keep to defend the lands about and had grown tired of brigands setting up rival court in the abandoned holy houses, so he financed the efforts of the villagers and gave them what logistical and military support he could. The inhabitants of today's Monksblade hark back to those intrepid Crown-sponsored souls.

#### Landmarks

The growth of other communities of the coast has drained away some of the life

from Monksblade since then, but what's left is a delight to the eye. The village is all huge old trees shading charmingly overgrown gardens and cemeteries. Crumbling ruins and cottages are visible wherever the eye turns.

The monasteries were founded here in the first place because of a deep well of clear, fresh water. The presence of a well has long been a fixture in the walled gardens of Mother Chauntea's House, but this site is regarded as holy by worshipers of Chauntea *and* is an attraction that interests many other folk because of the macabre associations it has acquired.

In the failing days of the holy houses, several unscrupulous mages led expeditions to pillage the monks' riches. They were fought off by the last few Knights of Tempus and Tyche, who fought side by side against these defilers. Six of these devout defenders met their ends beside the well. Its present name, Lost Knights' Dance, commemorates their horrible deaths. They were transfixed with arrows while helplessly shuffling about in the grip of Otto's irresistible dance spells. Their shadowy, fully armored forms still appear here on some moonlit nights. dancing silently about the gardens. They are said to point out secret ways into the holy houses and the location of buried treasure (or its former location) to living folk they encounter who bear the holy symbols or devices of Tyche or Tempus.

Some 300 folk call Monksblade home these days. Some of them have undoubtedly followed up these spectral directions. Any treasure that can easily be reached has already been recovered, but there are persistent rumors of deep cellars in these monasteries that haven't yet



been opened up. Some, it is whispered, even contain a temple dedicated to an evil cult that may still survive. There are also many legends of holy swords, dedicated to Tyche and Tempus, hidden away deliberately in the vicinity of Monksblade by dying knights who struggled back from secreting their blades to fall dead in the consecrated inner courtyards of the monasteries they'd served so diligently. Certainly the teachings of Tempus identify Monksblade as a place where sacred swords still lie, awaiting those who'd find favor with the Lord of Battles by taking them up and wielding them for good.

To most visitors, all this history is merely a succession of pleasant stories to hear as they relax by the fire at the famous Firedagger Inn, having a last mulled cider and a plate of hot buttered mushrooms. Thea, my serving maid, tells me these mushrooms are picked in the ruins. The caps are thrust into a covered pan of melted butter and fried with salt, a pinch of basil, and just a sprinkle of firefruit or lemon juice until they are full of their own brown broth, and then they are served hot. The mushroom stalks are added to chicken stock for morning soups. Simple fare but fit for the gods!

In addition to the cozy inn, Monksblade boasts Hunting the Knight, a superior tavern (another allusion to the hamlet's monastic past), and the Old Oyster, a superb restaurant. The Oyster is better than any dining house in Suzail! The hamlet also features a swap-horse stables, a tack and ironmongery shop (both adequate but average), and Wendeira's Wondery—a shop worth seeing.

# Places of Interest in Monksblade

Shops
Wendeira's Wondery

**Oddments and Minor Magical Items** 

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This strange, cavernlike shop is crammed with a tumbled mess of the spendidly odd and unusual. Many of this shop's wares bear minor enchantments such as kindling canisters that keep everything within bone-dry, upright wardrobes whose doors open on verbal command, or rings that glow briefly when twisted, for example. The proprietress is fully as odd as any of her wares.

The lithe, beautiful Wendeira sings softly as she dances and glides endlessly through her shop, caressing her goods as she dusts them, her dark eyes startlingly large in a bone-white face. She wears only dark gowns of fashions long forgotten in the courts of Inner Sea realms. Many folk think her some sort of undead and don't tarry, but her shop is truly a cornucopia of wonders. Wendeira buys up all the real oddities her good friend Aurora<sup>16</sup> can find.

For instance, Wendeira offers glass fishbowls in the shape—and full size!—of voluptuous women; chairs whose arms sport brass castings of hands whose fingers can be manipulated to grasp your favorite pipe, open book, or lamp; mirrors that sing a cycle of songs when uncovered; and a full line of glow-in-thedark domino masks, fashion accessories now much favored in Sembia, Westgate, and even in distant Waterdeep at the wilder nobles' revels!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>She of the growing Faerûn-spanning chain of catalog establishments.



These last can be had in various sizes and hues or emitting randomly shifting radiances. They can be yours for a mere 250 gp for the smallest and simplest to 2,900 gp for the one that once per tenday enables its wearer to *fly* for as long as it takes a person to breathe thrice, expediting romantic liaisons from midnight gardens to balconies high above.

## Restaurants The Old Oyster

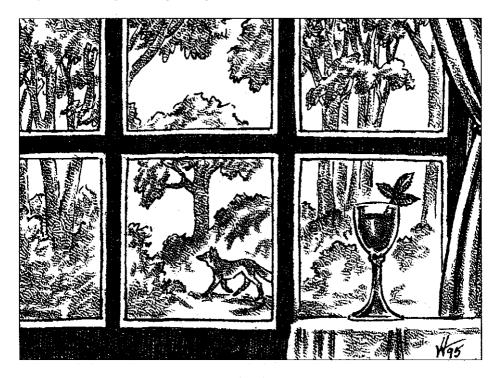
!!!! 00000

This charming place consists of two crumbling turrets joined by a long, low kitchen. Windows (real glass, and clear as crystal!) look out south over the overgrown forest gardens that once graced the Lady's House. People looking through

them can watch foxes trot by and fireflies dance and swirl of an evening.

Here one can get (of course) good oysters that have been brought up the Wyvernflow from the fishing village of Moonever (at the mouth of the river) and the freshwater eels favored by coastal Cormyreans—who're welcome to them! The Oyster also has a large, good cellar of ales and wines. Be warned, though, that the local fern-and-mint wine is an acquired taste. This so clear and cool that it burns the mouth and admits of no other tastes for the rest of an evening!

Visitors can also get more usual fare: stewed hare, pork and beef roasts, and grilled pheasant. Yet all of that can be had elsewhere, and I urge every traveler to flock to the Oyster for the best wyvern tail to be had in all Cormyr. If you've never had wyvern tail, a treat awaits you!





Real wyvern tail is seldom available these days, unlike earlier days when the Stonelands were infested with the beasts. I can tell you it's a hard white meat reminiscent of the finest succulent pork; it is to be seized if one ever has the chance. The same seasonings and recipes originally created for real wyvern tail have often been applied to an artful chopped mixture of pork, turkey meat, and rabbit, and called "jack wyvern tail," or "Jack's wyvern tail." The mixture of the three meats somewhat approaches the splendor of true wyvern flesh.

Here at the Oyster they call jack wyvern tail "old wyvern tail," and their secret recipe includes chopped roast almonds and asparagus broth. Old wyvern tail is served on a bed of mushroom-creamed coins of fried potato. It is stuffed into a crisped skin of pork crackling that's been sewn into an arc

as thick through as a large man's thigh, aping the shape of part of a wyvern's tail. The dish is simply fit for the gods themselves! I've seen men gorge themselves into slumber on it, and the portions are enough to feed four hungry men comfortably or provide two with two full meals and a light highsun chew of sliced cold meat served in a hollowed-out handloaf of dark waybread.

# Taverns Hunting the Knight

# !!! 00000

This place is a low-beamed, cozy warren of dark booths and flagstone-floored rooms, each with its own fireplace and its own stone box of cool wine. Wheels of salty cheese, bowls of nuts, and—in season—boiled peapods and fiddleheads are





everywhere, free for the taking. The place is crammed with comfortable furniture, and patrons are encouraged to lounge with their feet up and chat the night away.

Hunting the Knight seems to be home to several garrulous old retired farmers and ex-adventurers who happily spin tales of the heroes, hauntings, lost treasures, and colorful deeds of the area's past, such as the Looking Lady. The Looking Lady is a tall, gowned phantom lady who glides eerily through the gardens of Monksblade when—and only when—sea mists have rolled in. She hurries here and there, searching for something. She has petrified many a resident and visitor with fear by thrusting her silent skull face into their window or room to look sharply all around and then withdraw it!

Local legend says she seeks the statuette that holds her soul. It is part of a hidden treasure hoard left behind by an evil wizard who enslaved her. If the treasure is found, 'tis said, she'll follow its finder forever as a guardian watchghost, even if she or he hurls away or destroys the statuette!

Hunting the Knight is my favorite place in all Faerûn to spend a restful evening. If I had to wait out the rest of my days in a tavern, this would be the one I'd choose.

# INNS The Firedagger Inn



A fitting companion to the other superb establishments of Monksblade, this house is named for the flying fiery magical blade that nearly burnt it down during a wild duel between the Red Wizard Artigaun of Tyraturos and Ondelos the Archmage of Selgaunt. Both wizards died in the fray, and

the *firedagger* was left whirling in midair and spitting flames where the dying Ondelos had left it. Banished by a summoned war wizard, the *firedagger* reappears from time to time in the same place and has to be banished again. Several enchantments on it have prevented anyone from controlling it or removing it from the inn's dining room. Attempts to do so cause it to *blink* about, spitting jets of flame.

The inn itself is a delightful sprawl of luxuriously furnished, wood-paneled rooms. Each room is a suite with attached bathtub and dressing areas, and all suites are large enough that privacy is total; one should never hear other guests by night. Meals in covered warming platters are placed onto a dining table in every room by means of an otherwise-locked serving hatch. They're simple, light fare, but perfectly prepared, and there's never a shortage of juices, teas, and warm broth to be obtained at any hour. These drinks can be summoned by pulling on the appropriate bell pulls.

The staff is quiet, discreet, and generously provides extras to guests such as soothing tales for tired or scared children or lonely travelers, foot massages and backrubs for the weary, and even opponents for those who seek games of cards. Two of the young chambermaids—vivacious sisters, Areele and Baeranthra Morlar—even provide opponents for those who wish to practice fencing!

All in all, the Firedagger is a delightful place to stay—and a perfect place for romance. It even has its own walled bower garden in which couples can while away evenings together and a stable capable of repairing damaged carts and luggage as well as bathing or doctoring weary or injured horses! Such extras add 10 gp to one's bill.



### Wheloon

This town of some 3.700 folk is the southern gateway to the Wyvernwater, a strategically located ferry crossing and barge transshipment center on the Way of the Manticore. Increasingly, Wheloon is serving as an alternative to the expensive, overcrowded ports of Suzail and Marsember for the moving of small cargoes to and from the heartlands of Cormyr. Barges from Wheloon navigate the Wyvernflow to other coastal ports or cross the Wyvernwater to trade up the Starwater River to its navigable limits. This prosperous place bustles day and night, and its stone buildings grow ever taller and grander. Their roofs are all of dark green slate from Cormyr's largest quarry, a monster-haunted hole near Marsark's Grove due north.

Wheloon is a place of money, entrepreneurial excitement, and growth, where skilled craftsfolk are constantly forming small cabals to invest in new ventures. The businesses most popular with these investors are their own cutrate transportation companies. These transportation companies must be guarded by hireswords against the depredations of brigands hired by the established costers to try to drive such fledgling competitors out of business.

Wagons, crates, and barrels are turned out constantly in the shops of Wheloon, and new trades such as the breeding and training of ferrets and bluebirds (increasingly popular as pets in Cormyr) jostle for space with the established farming commerce in wheat, pumpkins, melons, apples, peaches, grapes, raspberries, and blueberries. More





bulk food and grain is shipped out of Wheloon than any other Cormyrean port, and the returns are impressive. An acre of raspberries can earn as much as 20 sewn acres of wheat when the crops of warmer lands on the southern shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars are poor or paltry.

At least one plant crop from warmer climes has been imported to Cormyr by a Whelunian "hothands" (entrepreneur): the rosecork tree from the Isle of Prespur. The rosecork was brought hence by Sarliman Eurdoe, and it is now growing up and down the banks of the Wyvernflow. It sees heavy use in buildings due to its durability and near-invulnerability to fire. It absorbs so much water that most open flames can't ignite a piece of rosecork unless the wood is exposed to hot flame for hours.

#### Landmarks

In this wealthy, fast-growing town, little is permanent and less still stands out as grand among the soaring stone and slate homes and shops or particularly shabby among the clusters of sagging timber and thatch warehouses. The largest landmarks are, of course, the Wyvernflow and the Wyvern Ferry that crosses it whenever travelers desire, day or night. A crossing costs 1 cp per head plus another copper for every crate or bag that travelers can't carry on in their hands in a single embarkment and another copper on top of that per cart, wagon, mount, or pack animal.

Hard by the western ferry dock stands the Wyvern Watch Inn. Across the river from it, at the other end of the ferry's route, is the Lantern Inn and Boat Rental. The western shore is the longest-settled and most prosperous side of Wheloon. There one can find Wheloon Way crossing the Way of the Manticore not far west of the ferry dock. On one corner of the intersection stands the Wheloon Watch House, the local jail and Purple Dragon barracks and armory. Past the butcher's stockyards (easily located by anyone with a working nose) and a little way north up Wheloon Way, the Wheloon Moothouse faces the lush paddock and impressive facade of Oldstone Hall, the home of the king's lord of Wheloon, Sarp Redbeard. The Wheloon Moothouse is the local meeting hall and courthouse.

Other landmarks of use to the visitor include the God's Grove and Rathool's Pool. The God's Grove is a place of worship to Silvanus in a stand of duskwood trees just off the Way of the Manticore. The duskwood trees mark the easternmost boundary of Wheloon. Rathool's Pond is the local swimming hole and trout fishing pond. The pond was once used to bury battle dead; its rusty waters aren't recommended for drinking.

# Places of Interest in Wheloon

#### Palaces

#### Oldstone Hall

One of the grand old manors of the notquite-castle sort built by nobles in the days of Cormyr's early pride, this massive, sootdarkened stone edifice is an intricate masterpiece of carved gremlins, gargoyles, satyrs, wyverns, and fanciful long-necked dragons called "jubbrawuks" by some sages. The gargoyles are said to animate upon the command of the local lord or Court Wizard Vangerdahast. Plinths supporting such sculptures flank the gates of the Hall and the









### Wheloon Map Key

- 1. Wyvern Ferry route
- 2. Wyvern Watch Inn
- 3. The Lantern Inn and Boat Rental
- Wheloon Watch House (jail, Purple Dragon barracks, & armory)
- 5. Wheloon Moothouse (meeting hall and courthouse)
- **6.** Oldstone Hall (home of Lord Sarp Redbeard)
- 7. The Silvery Sembian Snail (tavern)
- 8. Immerhand Inn
- **9.** God's Grove (shrine to Silvanus)
- **10.** Rathool's Pond (local swimming and fishing pool)
- **11.** The Blackbard (boat-building and rental storage)
- **12.** Cormyrean Coins Coster wharf and warehouse
- **13.** Falconstar Wayshipping (rental storage wharf and warehouse)
- **14.** The Fish House (fishmonger and icehouse)
- **15.** Haerldoun's Helms & Shields (armor and weaponry shop)
- **16.** Haldos's Fine Butchery (butcher shop, slaughterhouse, and stockyards)
- **17.** Hanno's Herbs and Medicines (shop)
- **18.** Rallogar Hardware (shop)
- **19.** Redbeard Rental Storage and Shipping (rental space warehouse)
- **20.** Sendever's Stables (horses bought, sold, doctored, and boarded)
- **21.** Slowtooth Weaponry (shop)
- **22.** Wheloon Tack & Leather (shop)
- 23. Woumar's Wheloon Mill
- **24.** The Sleeping Cat (restaurant)
- **25.** The Scarlet Sheaf (tavern)



towering stone walls that enclose its pad-dock. The paddock is a rolling expanse of groomed lawn out of which rise many old and massive duskwood, oak, and shadowtop trees. Certain Harpers, war wizards, king's messengers, and other esteemed guests stay at the Hall, but most visitors can only gawk at its quiet luxury from outside the warning-warded 17 gates.

#### Shops

I write extensively here of Wheloon's shops because they're so handy to the traveler and so eager to please due to the heated competition.

#### The Blackbard

Barge-building and Rental Storage



This converted warehouse and wharf is a combined boat-building and rental storage business run by Shanna "Blackbard" Northgate, a retired minstrel (and, some say, thief) who claims to have abandoned a colorful past as a fence and smuggler after several heated interviews with Lord Redbeard and various vigilant war wizards. Her vocabulary, sharp-edged singing voice, and skills as a mimic are legendary, but she never skimps on the quality and seaworthiness of the barges she builds. Just don't expect any grander a boat out of the Blackbard than a large river barge.

Despite her professed renunciation of fencing and smuggling, Shanna rents out space with no questions asked and turns a blind eye and ear to its use as a holding area for bound and/or struggling captives, spellcasting, experimentation, and the like. Such temporary afflictions of the

senses—and a semipermanent one affecting her tongue and memory for secrets despite the searching spells of the authorities—have made Shanna Northgate a *lot* of gold coins over the years.

#### Cormyrean Coins Coster

Merchant Coster



One of the small, fast-growing shipping concerns founded locally, the Coiners have their own wharf and warehouse in Wheloon guarded by Coiner mages and veteran warriors. This proud and aggressive organization commanded by a former adventuring band uses small, fast coast-boats to run cargoes to Westgate, llipur, Teziir, and all ports in Cormyr and Sembia, and it also operates wagons throughout the Forest Kingdom and the neighboring Land of Fat Merchants (er, Sembia).

The Coiners have been caught smuggling cut gems in hollowed-out produce twice now and are operating under a "vigilant watch" status mounted by Wheloon's Purple Dragons. They make a lot of legitimate money speedily transporting perishable foodstuffs to restaurants in the two realms they operate in, but they have been known to slaughter those who try to hamper their trade—notably agents of the Zhentarim and of larger, older costers.

#### Falconstar Wayshipping

Warehouse

To date, Falconstar Wayshipping comprises the southernmost extension of Wheloon on the Wyvernflow's east bank. The *driftglobe*-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>They bear ring wards; for details, see Appendix III.



lit wharf and warehouse south of the Coiner compound is the establishment of Mhaernos Falconstar, a slim, cultured, blackbearded man with pretensions to nobility. Mhaernos rents storage space to caravan masters and ship captains transshipping cargoes between land and water. He guards his wharf with two ettin zombies, and something worse aids the warehouse guards—something that has twice slain pirate raiding bands to the last person and devoured all evidence of the unpleasantness.

# The Fish House Fishmonger and Ice Dealer



This ramshackle, reeking old wharf and warehouse are slowly crumbling and sagging into the river. Until they're actually swept away, however, fishing boats from both the Wyvernwater upstream and the open sea to the south will tie up here daily to sell their cargoes.

Old Ascalan the fishmonger is a rather portly retired wizard who ices the fish with the help of his *ring of frost* <sup>18</sup> and sells both fish and ice to the townsfolk of Wheloon—and to anyone else who happens by. He's also been rarely known to sell magical potions for very high fees. He loves to talk endlessly about the lost treasures and adventurers' lore of Cormyr.

### Haerldoun's Helms & Shields Armor and Select Weapons



The proprietress of this shop, the fiery-tempered Albhaera Haerldoun, plunged eagerly

into the life of a chartered adventurer until she saw her first beholder in the Thunder Peaks. She fled frantically as the eye tyrant slaughtered all of her companions, and she retired forthwith to this wharfside shop to sell armor and a few select weapons from the Inner Sea lands to passersby. (Once a smuggler's haven, the shop had been purchased by the band as a sideline investment.) She succeeds admirably her trade. She specializes in selling knives that are made to rest in sheathes built into the backs of shields and into greaves, bracers, breastplates, and such. The shop generally has a superior selection of shields, gorgets, and greaves, a few pairs of gauntlets, and a smattering of secondhand armors.

Albhaera is one of the most stunningly beautiful women I have ever seen, and she always wears flattering cutaway armor. On most days, a small crowd of smitten warriors hangs around the shop, bantering with her and trying to impress her with their muscles and tales of their prowess. From time to time, one of the warriors demonstrates knife-throwing expertise, or two of them stage a mock joust and such activities attract business to Albhaera's shop. Purple Dragon patrols have been known on occasion to mount daily inspections of the place. This has led to townsfolk calling out to them in the street, "Better check my basket here, look ye-mayhap Albhaera's hiding in it!"

### Haldos's Fine Butchery Butcher



Much to the annoyance of his neighbors, some of whom never grow used to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Treat this as a *wand of frost* with endless charges. Ascalan's sons, who also do the loading and unloading, pump river water in large tanks and thence into pans that Ascalan can easily freeze once they're full of fish.



sounds of Haldos cheerfully wrestling a calf to his chopping block and beheading it, this huge, spade-bearded giant of a man has his slaughterhouse, shop, and stockyards right in the center of town. Not that anyone would dare to argue with Haldos about the placement of his business—or for that matter, about anything.

Although most prefer their meat smoked and hung, Haldos is one of the few butchers who can slaughter on the spot and provide meat as fresh as it be gotten. This ability is valuable to certain cooks, alchemists, priests, and mages for varying purposes.

# Hanno's Herbs and Medicines Herbalist and Physic

The always-smiling Hanno Minstrelsong was once, under another name, a thief so successful that he had to flee Amn with magical aid to elude no less than six separate pursuing would-be assassins. Now he's settled down to a good-natured life of dispensing physics to passersby and selling bulk powdered and bottled herbs purchased from halfling hamlets in the coast and east reaches farm belt to caravan merchants headed for markets in Suzail, Westgate, and Sembia.

One of the mixed remedies Hanno sells is a short-duration but almost absolute slayer of pain. Warriors who've just lost limbs in battle have been known to fight cheerfully on after it was administered to them. Another secret mixture puts humans, halfelves, or elves into a sleep so deep that they can be wounded or even tossed down flights of stairs without awakening them.

The rarest and most valuable of Hanno's wares is the spellbane herb. He typically has only a small live plant or a hand keg of dried leaves in stock. He only parts with the plant for 100 gp or more. Pieces from it are 40 gp or more, and dried leaves are 25 gp each.<sup>19</sup>

# Rallogar Hardware Hardware and Rope

Across the street from the Wheloon Watch House, at the intersection of Wheloon Way and the Way of the Manticore, Zendaros Rallogar runs an old-fashioned hardware shop, the sort that still looks like the old. dusty stables it once was. It's even complete with a hayloft crammed with old junk-and occasionally patrons who've paid hastily but handsomely to hide from inquisitive Purple Dragons or to eavesdrop unseen from above. Here one can buy all manner of old, rusting junk and new nails or select from a huge array of hooks-from the sort that hold high-fashion masks to ladies' hairdos, right up to monster-sized hooks designed for towing one barge by another.

The other equipment Zendaros takes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Spellbane is a plant that apparently grows only in Cormyr in spots of deep shade, where it can cling to rocks—that is, in rock clefts, on forest rock piles, and in cave mouths. Chewed and swallowed, it affects, so far as is known, all living creatures in the same way: Any spellcasting abilities are deadened (effectively lost) for 3d4 hours. During the same time the creature that consumes a piece receives a magic resistance or an augmentation to any resistance it may already possess. The ability of a being to wield and command magical items is unaffected by spellbane.

Consuming a sprig or dried remnant of spellbane increases a diner's magic resistance by 5%. Devouring an entire fresh plant benefits magic resistance by +10%. If a total amount of spellbane larger in volume than a human head is consumed at one time, magic resistance is created or improved by +20%; this is the maximum possible known benefit from eating spellbane. These benefits supersede one another; they're not cumulative.





care to keep in around is rope and wire. He stocks lots of it, in all sizes and lengths, from thin, black, waxed stranglers' cord to cables as thick as a brawny warrior's forearm used for ship-towing. The fiercely mustachioed Rallogar sells several gross of wire twists daily to merchants seeking to fix loose cargo down, and lengths of good hempenspun rope up to a thousand feet long can be had here on drums that fill a small cart. Rallogar's store is a browser's paradise.

# Redbeard Rental Storage and Shipping

Warehouse and Goods Handler

This three-floor warehouse stands hard by the public wharf on the west bank of the Wyvernflow. Shaped like an arrowhead, with two converging wings, it is the tallest, most massive stone structure in town and is steadily being improved to make it more defensible and fireproof. The uppermost floor was converted from timber to stone barely three seasons ago, and the thatch was replaced by a new roofpeak and tiles.

Owned by Lord Sarp Redbeard, this establishment is the cleanest, most heavily guarded, and best kept storage facility on the entire Way of the Manticore. It is a great example of how the wise merchant invests heavily in his business to make slow and steady money rather than pulling out as many coins as possible and letting the business sink into squalor.

Trained war dogs aid veteran warriors in guarding the place against rats, snakes, and larger, two-legged vermin. A rooftop watchpost guards against surprise pirate



attacks or raids from the air, and the entire compound is designed to give fire—even incendiary missiles—little to feed on. Even the loading dock is the best I've seen anywhere. It is covered from the weather, amply equipped with flatcarts, and fitted with overhead rolling-beam hoists.

The guards here have been specially trained in vigilance, and the warehouse crew takes care to give all cargo the best handling possible. The crew covers things that must be kept from the light, moves things about that should be moved from time to time, and uses handbarrows of fireheated rocks to heat cold corners of the warehouse during winter storms so that temperature-sensitive cargo is not damaged.

Redbeard's Rental Storage is superior business; Lord Redbeard is to be commended. Those whose trade involves storage would do well to tour this facility.

#### Sendever's Stables

Stables, Equine Trainers, and Horse Physics

On the east side of Wheloon Way one block north of the Moothouse stand the ample paddocks of this large and efficient operation. "Horses Bought, Sold, Doctored, and Boarded" read the signs at the gate, and Illumor Sendever does all of those things, assisted by an expert staff of over a dozen hostlers, trainers, and horse-husbanders. Their specialty is in quickly and correctly diagnosing and treating ailments and injuries of horses, mules, and donkeys. Most of them can tell in a breath or two if a mount's been drugged to kill pain and so disguise lameness. By the same token, the merchant who leaves his mount here can

be sure that it will be in good health, well fed, and properly exercised on his return. If it's not so prepared for any reason, a better beast will be waiting in its stead.

Such service has won Sendever's an enviable reputation for reliability. The facility does a brisk trade despite its stiff fees. Thieves in want of a few good horses would do well to look elsewhere. Hired watchers patrol the compound, armed with hand crossbows that fire sleep-venomed darts.

#### Slowtooth Weaponry

Weapons Shop



The retired Purple Dragon officer Nym "Slowtooth" Nindar runs this popular house of arms, which stands in the southwest corner of the intersection of the Way of the Manticore and Westbank March, the farm road that follows the Wyvernflow from the heights above Wheloon down to the coast. As befits a shop bristling with polearms and arrows, the Purple Dragons mount an armory guard on this crowded shop.

Many adventurers, hireswords, and possible brigands show up to drink Slowtooth's mulled cider and swap stories of bold and brave battle while they watch old Nindar demonstrate the proper use of and care for a blade to bright-eyed younglings. Axe-hurling is Nindar's private sport, and he often demonstrates how a well-thrown "biter" can shear through the thin, light modern shields popular in the Inner Sea lands. Thieves are warned that Nindar can hit any spot he cares to in and around his shop and can pull open several shuttered windows—including one in the shop door—from afar by using cords under his



desk. The axes he hurls through the openings then bite deep into fleeing flesh, not intervening wood!

When business is slow, Slowtooth's been known to teach the use of particular weapons to warriors willing to pay; he's skilled with a wide variety of types of arms. He leaves shop duties in the hands of his five sons while he's instructing.

# Wheloon Tack & Leather Tack, Leather Armor, Scabbards

This aromatic shop sells not only riding breeches, gloves, and belts, but a full range of scabbards and harnesses, too. It stocks everything from light thief's armor up to full studded leathers and from a bareback bridle to reins and traces for a wagon team of up to 16 horses or oxen. The proprietor, an old, white-bearded and limping wizard by the name of Landon Bhentyl, prides himself on having everything in stock at all times so as never to leave a customer in need.

Landon is a staunch defender of law and order who retired from the ranks of the war wizards after almost dying of poisoned wounds. He is known as "Wonderwand" because he defends his shop with a brace of wands kept at his belt and is always pulling out his wand of wonder by mistake when he wants to blast thieves with a wand of magic missiles or a wand of paralyzation.

Landon is known to wear boots of levitation. If attacked by strong foes, he rises up out of their reach and hurls spells or fires wands from on high. He can maintain his balance aloft when doing such things through long practice.

#### Woumar's Wheloon Mill

Grist Mill

Leahon Woumar runs his large, imposing stone grist mill for the farmers around Wheloon as his father did before him. A cheerful, jovial fellow, Leahon chats with everyone who drops by and serves many townsfolk as a confidant. Though he never betrays who said what to him, he is a good source of local gossip, rumors, and opinion. The local Purple Dragons go to him to find out how Whelunians really feel about royal edicts and decrees and Lord Sarp's judgments in local legal disputes.

Leahon has improved on his father's building. His mill now has separate runs for simultaneous handling of corn, wheat, barley, and pulp (vegetable greens, bones, and scraps to be ground down into meal for spreading on fields).

Often a busy, noisy place, Woumar's has an upper room that looks down the river a long way. People sit in the room and game late into the night. Several Purple Dragons are of the opinion that they're watching for the stealthy approaches of smuggling boats.

# Restaurants The Sleeping Cat



This former tavern has become more and more of a quality eatery since it was bought by the retired warrior Whelgar Taerncole, once a member of the Easy Blades Adventuring Band. (The Easy Blades was chartered in Suzail but has often been suspected of smuggling exten-



sively along the Sembian coast.). Growing tired of nightly brawls, Whelgar did away with the wine cellar and the taproom and now serves only a little brandy, mead, and clarry to accompany a steadily improving menu of roast venison, fried eel soup, pork pastries, chicken and pheasant pies, stewed hare, wine-simmered goose, and aged brandycake.

Whelgar's cooks are wisely sticking to a small menu and mastering it. They remember if a particular patron likes meat rare or well-done, or if she or he likes horseradish poured on or prefers a soft and bland gravy.

The Sleeping Cat is favorite stop of mine. Were the menu larger, I'd give it a top rating.

# Taverns The Scarlet Sheaf

# !! 000

This rather seedy spot is the local drinking hole. It is frequented by weary farmers and passing merchants alike. Run by a onetime thief from distant Mulhorand, the tall and dark-eyed beauty Anthara "Softangles" Shalymarr, the Sheaf was once an abandoned ruin. One can tell this by looking at it.

The sinuous but fire-tempered Anthara, who's buried many a thrown dagger in overamorous patrons, believes that firmly nailed tapestries can serve to cover all manner of holes and unsightly burn scars, so the Sheaf is beginning to look like the dusty interior of a rather rundown harem. Zhentarim agents have

slain more than one foe by thrusting long blades through gaps in the walls—and the tapestries that cover them—from outside.

On the other hand, Anthara believes in comfortable furniture for weary and drunken patrons alike to lounge in and in swift service. Call for a drink, and it's in your hand in short order, brought by shapely waiting maids who always have a smile and a friendly wave for any patron. All the regulars rise to defend them if a customer grows unpleasant.

Anthara also firmly believes that a tavern is a place aside from everyday concerns. If you want to loudly discuss dark magic, unlawful deeds, or slavery, no one bothers you. Purple Dragons and others may listen in, of course. But by agreement with Lord Redbeard, what's said in the Sheaf won't be hurled in the face of whoever said it, out on the street a day or two later. In this way, the Scarlet Sheaf serves as both a gray market meeting place and a fire flume<sup>20</sup> for local society. I like the place, but the fastidious or fearful traveler may want to give the Sheaf a miss.

#### The Silvery Sembian Snail

# !!!! 0000

This luxuriously furnished house is the closest thing to a festhall in Wheloon. It stands at the most important Whelunian crossroads east of the Wyvernflow. Run by a former priest of Sune who left the faith because of disagreements over his overtly hedonistic views, <sup>21</sup> it's a cozy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Elminster says we would use the term safety valve.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>According to Elminster, the owner, Roond Asmyrk, is a CG hm C16 of Sune whose prayers are still answered by the goddess. He's merely outcast by the priesthood, and he cares not a whit about it. Several of the girls employed at the Snail are even learning Sune's teachings from him.





place whose wine cellar outstrips many nobles' palaces in Waterdeep and shames those of local lords of Cormyr and rich Sembian merchants alike.

The Snail's chief attraction, however, is its staff of beauteous and very friendly escorts. They not only serve wine and help customers drink it, they make a lot of it, too. The owner (he prefers the title "Housemaster"), Roond Asmyrk, has worked for many years on spells that can alter the scent and smell of fermented beverages so as to make them resemble other vintages. These shadow wines cost a fraction of what the true vintages do, but the discerning drinker can buy both at the Snail and sample them side by side.

Lord Redbeard has on several occasions reprimanded Housemaster Asmyrk when drunken revels spilled out of the Snail into surrounding areas, disturbing livestock. Asmyrk now takes care to cast "sober-up" spells on both his escorts and their not-so-gentle partners when things threaten to get out of hand. Recent indoor installations of gallery swing ropes, heated tubs of scented water for soaking, and a room of haystacks with spellglow "moonlight" have also contributed to keeping the fun—and the noise—indoors.

This joyous place is rapidly gaining fame. Loyal Cormyreans are advised that its name doesn't derive from any Sembian ownership. Rather, the name commemorates a famous Sembian nightclub dancer, the Silvery She-Snail. She retired several years ago to marry a powerful but reclusive archmage who devised the flying illusions spells that made her act such a success. The mage became so



smitten with her that he kidnapped—and then successfully wooed—her.

### INNS Immerhand Inn



This little-known establishment deserves its place as Wheloon's third inn. It's an inferior roadhouse most used by drovers and caravan merchants who don't want to venture into the crowded streets of Wheloon. Run by the retired mercenary warrior Chalthos Immer, the Immerhand is a dark, rustic building that stands at the northwest edge of Wheloon at a waymoot just north of Rathool's Pond.

Chalthos doesn't provide anything to eat or drink, and guests must pump their own wash water, stable and feed their own beasts, and use an outhouse across the muddy wagonyard out back. The furnishings are a fascinating mix of bought, scavenged, and clumsily home-built beds, stools, and sitting chests. Each room is lit by a massive storm lantern of the sort that never failed Chalthos during his fighting career, and each room has just one touch of luxury: a painting looted by the proprietor from somewhere in Faerûn!

#### The Lantern Inn and Boat Rental



The Wyvern Watch commands the west side of the ferry route, and the Lantern stands at its eastern end. The bluff, goodnatured proprietor of the Lantern, Staephon Gylesman, is something of a scholar of old ballads and literature of the North. He makes most of his coins renting barges and small boats to guests

who'd like to take to water here with a minimum of fuss, delay, and publicity.

The inn is the closest thing in Wheloon to an average roadhouse, and the prices are a trifle high for what the traveler gets—certainly much more than those at the Wyvern across the river. So on most nights, the wyvern fills up first, and everyone who can't get in there grumbles and then makes the trip here. Large parties of travelers often prefer the Lantern, however. It has large suites of rooms with their own hearths and baths; the suites can be barred from within. Overall, the Lantern is not a bad inn.

#### The Wyvern Watch Inn



The largest, busiest, and most handsome inn in Wheloon, the Wyvern is a success because of its location (hard by the ferry slip on the Wyvernflow's west bank) and because of its owner's generous nature. The cynical, red-faced, stout ex-warrior Buldegas Mhaerkoon keeps his prices low. Rates are as little as a silver piece a night, with drinks, meals, and a bath included! (Stabling and feed is 2 cp per beast extra.) Some horse stalls in Suzail are thrice that!

Mind you, the beer is watered, the wine more so, and the food coarse bread and salty vegetable stews—but you can live on it. The rooms are private, warm, and furnished with fresh linen. Most are simple cubicles with a chamberpot, a side shelf, a row of hanging pegs, and a rope-and-straw mattress woven from wall to wall. There's no bed; the ropes are tied to rings set right into the wall. But the door bolts, and the window can be opened. What more do you want for a single silver falcon?



### Wormtower

This village of 450 or so is unknown to most Cormyreans, since its folk don't travel or boast much. Named for a mage's tower largely destroyed a century ago when a dragon tore its upper floors apart, slew the mage, and took up residence in the ruins, Wormtower fills a small, secluded valley north off the Bluemist Trail and about a half day's ride west of Dawngleam.

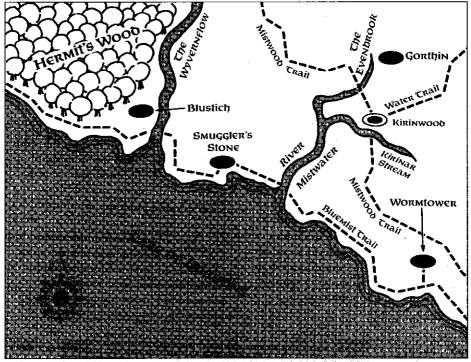
Wormtower's citizens include some of the best coopers, carpenters, and potters in Cormyr. From this vale of cottages, winding lanes, tiny gardens, and many trees come everyday useful items widely used in the Dragonreach: coffers, chests, folding chairs, shelves, lanterns, ladders, and carved trim for doorframes, stairs, and tavern booths. There's another reason this little-known place should be in any guide to Cormyr: Many bards are drawn to its tower ruins to gaze and pen ballads. Even more dwarves come to look longingly at all the gold. Some, driven mad by goldlust, perish trying to reach the hoard. Others, ancient and failing, deliberately choose to totter toward the gold, and find death by the guardian lightnings. What hoard? Read on . . .

#### Landmarks

The tiny valley that holds Wormtower is a maze of crowded, steeply sloped holds divided by hedges, rubble walls, and flagstone and gravel lanes. Finding one's way around is hard enough, let alone distinguishing anything as a landmark.







There are exceptions: The road south that leaves the Bluemist Trail beside a placid pond known as Wyrm Pool proceeds up the valley arrow-straight to end at the gates of ruined Wormtower. There it opens east into a small market square flanked by the village's tavern, inn, and the Tower Shop—a trading post where travelers can buy selected merchandise from most village craftsfolk or meet with them to order more goods.

### Places of Interest in Wormtower

# Unique Sites Wormtower

This spectacular stone ruin stands in the heart of the vale like a giant stone hand,

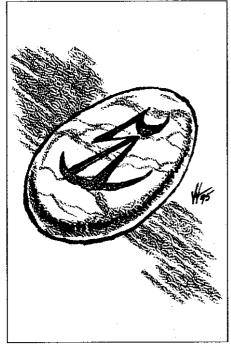
its fingers pointing forever at the stars. These fingers are the pillars and remaining fragments of stone wall. The skeleton of the dragon who destroyed the tower can be clearly seen inside, sprawled atop its huge hoard of gems and gold coins. It perished decades ago of some unknown but nonviolent cause, probably a disease. Beneath the dragon's bones and the hoard lie the dead mage's bones and whatever magic from the tower that may yet survive.

The place is shunned by locals, and few adventurers survive any attempt to approach the tower closely. To venture within 10 feet of its walls invites a lightning bolt strike from the tumbled stones. Those who persist and enter are seen to change into beast shapes and then vanish.









No one is known to have successfully penetrated the ruins and emerged again with any treasure. The wards laid down by the mage and twisted by the dragon's own mastery of magic remain strong and effective. Local legend says only someone possessing a passagestone crafted by the dead mage Nendar

Thrinn that bears his rune can freely enter Wormtower.

A painting of such a *passagestone* hangs in the local tavern, but the original used by the forgotten limner was shattered to dust in a duel between greedy wizards. It's not known if any other specimens still exist, though it is certain that Nendar had a hidden refuge somewhere in Cormyr, complete with potions, spellbooks, and magical items for emergency —presumably including a spare *passagestone*<sup>22</sup>.

#### Shops Tower Shop

Furniture and Local Crafts

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This sprawling, cluttered shop burrows into and climbs the side of a small knoll. It is made of a series of small, crowded rooms linked by short, steep stairs and unexpected archways. Lit by cages of glowmoss, the rooms are crammed with a wide variety of furniture and other items made by local craftsfolk.

The proprietress, Bruima Shalut, can arrange business meetings by bringing villagers to her back room to meet with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Any living being approaching within 10 feet of any part of Wormtower's walls from any direction (in other words, cellar floors and uppermost spires are included) is struck by a 14d6 *lightning bolt*. Victims who make a successful saving throw vs. spell take only half damage.

Any solid organic mass, alive or dead, that moves within Wormtower's walls must make successful a saving throw vs. spell each round or be affected by a *shape change* spell, turning the fungus, plant, or creature into a random life form not of its own choosing. The shape a transformed being assumes is, however, a shape able to survive in the conditions prevailing in Wormtower—in other words, not a waterbreathing aquatic form or one requiring extremes of temperature for survival. Dead organic forms change shape but do not regain life.

Whenever something within the walls of Wormtower is so transformed, it is *teleported without error* to a random location in Faerûn on the following round and then changes shape again. The transformed being receives no saving throw against being teleported or transformed once more, but the second shape it assumes is again one that can survive in its new surroundings.

These defenses have caused the disappearance of many adventurers over the years. The war wizards long ago decided to expunge all records of Wormtower and quell tales and rumors about it to stem the flow of disappearing young adventurers. It is thought the presence of a passagestone turns off all of these defenses in a 90-foot-radius area of effect around the passagestone for as long as it is present.



patrons by means of several swiftfooted errand boys. She can also tell visitors where in the valley they can buy used goods and trophies: remnants of defeated monsters and pieces of old armor and weaponry once borne by the formidable and the not-so-famous.

Bruima is said to defend herself with several enchanted flying daggers that can zip about invisibly, pursuing thieves until they can strike to best advantage. Other locals say she runs the shop in league with a family of leprechauns who dwell in hidden rooms and passages at its heart. Armed with their own needlelike knives, these leprechauns are themselves the flying daggers that others think Bruima commands.<sup>23</sup>

# Taverns Ten Tankards Today

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This place is a roadhouse of the sort found all over Amn: That is, it is as good in cellar and provender as anywhere else but possesses many modern, clean booths and multiple taprooms rather than a single smoke-filled venue. The fare here is light and salty; it is designed to make one drink ever more.

Because of its modern multiple boothand-taproom design, Ten Tankards has become *the* meeting place and common business office of all Wormtower. The signboard, a circle of ten upended, sudsdripping pewter tankards, is unmistakable, and the hitching trough out front is usually crowded with all manner of mounts. Visitors are asked to tie up griffons or hippogriffs apart from the horses of other patrons.

# INNS The Dead Dragon Inn

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This house is a little too rustic for my tastes. There's only one hearth outside of the kitchens. That and the ill-fitting shutters on the windows make for a chilly and drafty stay at any time of year and a positively frigid visit in winter. The windows lack glass, mica, or any other coverings save a few cloaks nailed up by desperate travelers who presumably perished of cold before morning and so did not reclaim their clothing.

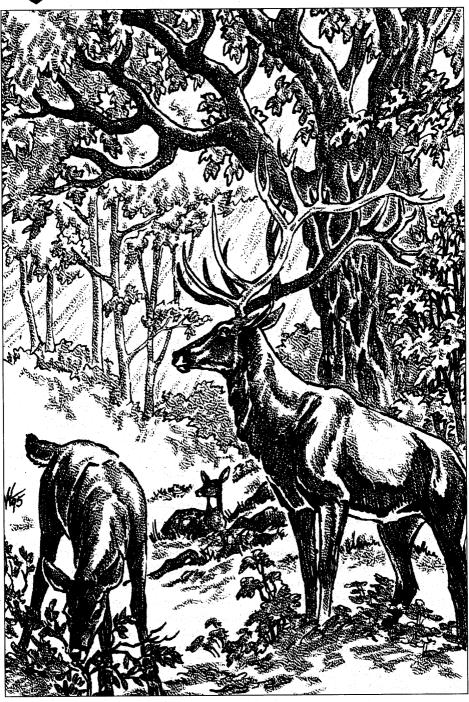
There are no chamberpots, and the lone outhouse tends to be a long, long way across the stable yard when there's snow on the ground. I guess that's why the windows open so easily.

On the other hand, the food is deftly spiced, expertly served, and plentiful. The inn's staple fare is a constant supply of fresh-baked bread, roast spitted fowl, a plethora of soups and stews, and special additions provided by local hunters. The nonstop bread-baking makes the inn smell wonderful.

Named for the impressive draconic skeleton its upper windows overlook, this inn is staffed by several semiretired bands of adventurers. They are ready for and capable of dealing with rowdiness. They are also quite proud of the fact that King Azoun and Wizard of the Court Vangerdahast once stayed here and pronounced the inn "delightful."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>This is true, Elminster asserts. That is, Bruima does share the shop with leprechauns rather than having magical daggers under her control.







# The Heartlands



he heart of the Forest Kingdom is the King's Forest and the villages and towns in and around it. The King's Forest is an old,

deep, beautiful woodland of ancient moss-cloaked trees, deep and hidden ravines, magnificent stags, and endless firewood. Most folk picture the green vastness of the Ring's Forest when they think of Cormyr. Its presence makes Cormyr what it is: among other things, one of the most beautiful realms in all Faerûn.

No travel writer could say too much about the huge, glorious Ring's Forest that almost entirely covers the heartlands. It's large enough to spend a lifetime wandering around and holds many communities of satyrs, pixies, korred, and even elves and halflings not covered in this or any human guidebook. At least one such territory located not far east of Waymoot, the dryad realm of Aloushe, considers itself an independent, sovereign realm. Its queen, Radanathe, told Vangerdahast so when his questing surveillance spells discovered her and he issued a longrange challenge.

Cormyrean legend abounds with tales of crumbling, forgotten ruins buried under the greenery and leaf mold of the depths of the Ring's Forest, and some manors of long-ago nobles have certainly been found over the years. Who's to say what secrets the heartlands may yet hold?

### Small Settlements

Most named places in the heartlands are worthy of full entries in this book, but there are some I've slighted because of lack of space. For travelers' reference, here are notes on a few of these communities:

### Gray Oaks

Once known as Black Oaks, this village of 400-odd halfling folk was almost entirely destroyed by fire and fell magic during the Time of Troubles. It was then decimated again on one dark occasion when (accounts differ) a powerful priest of Cyric attacked several war wizards, or a Zhentarim mage and a priest of Cyric struck at some war wizards, or a force of war wizards tried to destroy a party of Zhentarim mages and one of them turned out to be Cyric himself!

About all that's left of the community today is blasted ruins inhabited by some halfling woodcarvers and a few hardy human families who eke out a living gathering the mushrooms and glowing mosses that grow on the rocks hereabouts. Once Gray Oaks was known as the "breadbasket of Northbank," the halfling-settled farmlands on the north side of the Starwater and south of the King's Forest. It was the largest farmers' market in all Cormyr. Today, a few new storage sheds have been built to shelter foodstuffs waiting for caravan wagons to pick them up, but Jester's Green farther south has usurped the status

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A distillate of the glowing moss is used in many spell inks and in various magical items concerned with luminescence.



of being first among markets that Gray Oaks once enjoyed.

Aside from the ruins, there's also a small inn here, the Trailswatch. It is used by Suzailans of middling means who've purchased one of the few hunting licenses granted to commoners each year. Guides trained and themselves licensed by the Crown (and widely and rightly believed to be undercover Purple Dragons) dwell more or less permanently at the inn and operate out of it. They guide licensed hunters on well-used trails. The guides have a deepspawn hidden in a forest cave about a dozen miles north of the inn that produces deer, boar, and bear for vaunted hunters to bring down.

If you get the idea that I'm not thrilled by the quality of the Trailswatch, you're right. Despite the snarling-headed pelts of gigantic forest owlbears and wolves that adorn every wall, floor, and ceiling of the place that isn't covered by a tapestry showing a king of Cormyr hunting boars, wyverns, and even lions from horseback in the deepest forest, it has the look and the food of an institution. Even the squirrels probably report back to Vangerdahast. Hmphh.

### Hilp

This bustling town stands at the meeting of Calantar's Way and the Way of the Manticore. Hilp is named for a long-ago court jester of Cormyr who was granted extensive farmlands at this site. The town is a crowd of tall, narrow, slate-shingled shops with homes above them that keeps outgrowing its defensive walls and straggling along the two major roads in all directions.

It's a boring, business-bent place of grasping folk trying to gouge every last cop-

per out of customers and each other with nary a shop of interest save for two places: the Slipper Shop and Handiber's Stelk Farm. The Slipper Shop is run by a kindly old—and I mean old—elf crone who talks of Myth Drannor as if it were built yesterday. She sells cosmetics, herbs, scents, pomanders, medicines, and even magical potions (if asked nicely and properly) all packed in comfy embroidered cloth slippers.

The gruff, dry-humored Handiber actually only has a sale outlet in Hilp. His farm, where he grows stelk in three well-fenced fields, is at the edge of the woods nearby to the west. Stelk is a shrub about the size of a large man's fist and looks like a cluster of tiny brown or bronze cabbage heads. It is an oily, bitter, skunky plant according to the few humans who've tried it, though a few dwarf families have a frybread recipe that uses it.

It is, however, the best sort of fish bait going. All aquatic freshwater and marine creatures, from tiny streamflicker minnows to dragon turtles, love it. Coincidentally living things that eat it lose any capacity to generate or discharge electricity they may have. It's thus extremely valuable in the control of electric eels, as it has proven at Nesmyth to the southeast.<sup>2</sup>

Stelk commands high prices. The plants Handiber grows are staying effective in attracting fish longer and longer as he breeds ever-stronger varieties, allowing merchants to transport the stelk farther and keep it longer. Stelk grows on the shores of the Lake of the Long Arm and at a few other locales around Faerûn, but Handiber's crops, thought to have been transplanted by a mage teleporting from the Long Arm years ago, are the best and the closest to easy transport and large markets.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See the chapter in this guidebook on the coast.



Some call Handiber the "Father of All Farmed Fish" and credit him with feeding and fertilizing many remote northern communities with fish transported from Dragon Coast net-fenced bay hatcheries. But I ask you: Just how excited can you get about a plant only fish love to eat?

#### Minroe

Before the gem lodes ran out and medusae moved in, this small village was a bustling mining center. Hidden in the foothills of the Storm Horns due west of Waymoot, it's home to a few families who keep goats for the milk, meat, and cheese, and collect pixie cap mushrooms for sale in Suzail.<sup>3</sup>

The mountain caves and old mine delvings where the mushrooms grow were adopted as homes by medusae about 20 winters ago. Things quickly got deadly for the mushroom hunters and, soon after, for all the villagers. Various tactics failed to neutralize the medusae, until someone discovered that hedgehog shriekers growing in the deepest of the caves screech only when medusae approach. (Hedgehog shriekers are a species of the giant shrieker mushroom that are covered with sugary hedgehoglike fur.)

The ambulatory fungi are now carried along by Minrovan mushroom hunters, and most of the houses in Minroe now have shrieker gardens. These gardens are walled enclosures filled with aromatic rotting vegetables and dead fish mixed in the richest black river muck the Minrovans can bring in. A small freshwater pool is created in each of them, using magic to seal the banks against seepage, if necessary, and a stone

trough is installed and filled with a paste of crushed beetle larvae. Two or three captured hedgehog fungi are perfectly happy in such an environment and warn effectively of a medusa attack.

As a consequence of the hedgehog shrieker usage, the medusae are dwindling in numbers. Without human meals to use for primary sustenance, there just aren't enough rock rats and cave snakes to feed them. The grisly vale of petrified villagers that used to stand west of the village is now empty; the remains were stolen by Zhentarim agents for use as spell components. There's now nothing exciting about the smelly cottages of Minroe or the wary, always armed folk who dwell there, aside from pixie cap mushrooms and hedgehog shrieker fur. (The "fur" is now gaining favor as a dessert garnish on nobles' tables. A little spread on a biscuit is a delightful treat.)

### Plungepool

Ask most Cormyreans how many rivers run through the King's Forest and they tell you just one—the Starwater. Foresters, elves, and a few Purple Dragons know there's a second river, the Sharragh (pronounced "Sh air -a"). It rises in the rocky woodlands east of Espar, runs southeast through dense forest for several miles, and plummets in the depths of the earth at Plungepool. This well-like natural limestone shaft swallows the River Sharragh in an endless, spectacular waterfall whose roaring never fades. Mists always fill Plungepool, and a rich garden of ever-drenched mosses and plants carpet its slippery crumbling walls.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pixie cap mushrooms (sometimes known as fairy cap mushrooms) melt on the tongue and taste like buttery, nonbitter walnuts. Sun-dried specimens sell for as much as 50 gp each to gourmands and gourmets. For more on Minroe, see the Monsters chapter of *The Settled Lands* booklet of *Elminster's Ecologies*.



The Sharragh's punishing descent ends in a free fall through the darkness of a hundred feet or more through the upper air of a gigantic natural cavern and into a vast underground lake. This is Lake Thalmiir. named after its discoverer, a half-elven explorer and miner of Immersea. The roiling violence of the falling water makes the waters of Lake Thalmiir rich in oxygen. The waters are home to many fish and to water fungi that glow weirdly in the dark depths. I'm told by recent explorers that Thalmiir in turn drains into another, deeper lake, Daerbraun, which is fished by drow who dwell in a subterranean city nearby and who consider Daerbraun their private territory.

Most travelers never see the wonders of Plungepool, but it's one of the most breath-taking locales I've ever observed. Be warned: Stirges inhabit the skypines that grow thickly around the damp verges of the shaft, and the shaft's slick sides make climbing down for a good look or to harvest some of the rare flowers and plants that grow so profusely here extremely dangerous.

### Zundle

The now-vanished village of Zundle is marked only by a pump and a sagging, open-walled cowshed used by many travelers on the Way of the Dragon. The pump and shed stand on the west side of the road at the southern edge of the Ring's Forest.

I mention Zundle for two reasons. The practical one is the prevalence of garnets in the rocks here. Many an idle or poor way-farer has spent a profitable day or two prying gems out of the rocks to sell them in nearby Suzail. Gemhunters should beware, though, since a mimic or other creature

able to hide has taken up residence among the rocks and begun dining on humans!

The other reason I mention Zundle is that it is famous—or infamous—in Cormyrean lore as the fabled home of dull-witted bumpkins. "A real Zundle party" is often used to describe a disorganized or boring event, dinner, or affair. "He'd cut quite a dash in Zundle" or "All the boys'd be after her in Zundle" are terms used to describe someone very dirty, disheveled, or dressed in ridiculous costume. "Are ye sure ye're not from Zundle?" is used in place of "Are you crazy?" or "Do you really believe that? Well, you are an idiot!"

The folk of Zundle are believed to have been a bit slow-witted. The village was ultimately destroyed after an unusually bright troll who'd mastered a smattering of the common tongue by eavesdropping on camped wayfarers convinced Zundle's lone cattle sentinel to douse his fire one night, since it was hurting the troll's eyes. The obliging idiot did so, and he was promptly swarmed by two dozen trolls. They didn't quite kill him in their haste to get on and devour the rest of the sleeping village. The sentinel fled to tell his tale, and the Purple Dragon patrol he met galloped to Zundle just in time to find a village elder obligingly telling the bright troll all the hiding places, cellars, and suchlike that he could remember while other trolls scrambled to check each one in turn.

Rumors have circulated that years later a renegade priest of Waukeen once buried a temple treasury he'd stolen from Westgate in a Zundian paddock shortly before pursuing temple agents caught up with him. But, in truth, this could never have happened, since after the trolls were slaughtered, the village of Zundle wasn't rebuilt.



### Aunkspear

This village of 670 or so horse breeders and cabbage farmers stands atop and between a cluster of three hills northwest of Immersea, just off Calantar's Way. It's named for its most famous son, a long-dead common soldier who was born there, lived through many battles, and finally retired there. He gained fame for his laconic utterances such as: "Horses eat better than soldiers—and are issued more clothes to wear, too" and the widely known Faerûnian saying "Any battle ye survive is a great victory." Few folk, even in Cormyr, know the full, dry context of that last remark, which is as follows:

KING GALAGHARD III OF CORMYR: "Only three hundred of us left? What a disaster!" AUNKSPEAR: "Nay lord, 'tis a great victory." KING GALAGHARD: "A victory?" AUNKSPEAR: "Aye. Any battle ye survive is a great victory."

Several Obarskyr kings came to admire Aunkspear's plain speech and fearless head in battle, and he became an unofficial battle general in northeastern Cormyr. Today his resting place is marked by a stone that bears his name, his arms, and an inscription. The arms were granted to him by King Bryntarth II and consist of a two-headed flying falcon and the motto: "I see both sides, and say so." The inscription reads:

Here lies a man who served Cormyr well And spoke with kings as a friend. And when at last his death befell He went contented to this end.

Though it's pleasant enough to the eye of a traveler undemanding of amusements, Aunkspear may seem unimportant and unimpressive today but it was once an important place, though it was just as small as it is today. In the reign of Pryntaler, Aunkspear was the site of the royal mint. Jathos the Bold, the local smith, was empowered to strike coins for the realm. Just why this privilege was granted to him has always been a mystery, though court gossip of the time—and local lore today—whisper about Pryntaler and Alaethe, the smith's beautiful daughter. She never wanted for money and over the years had six sons who all looked like the king. To her grief, they grew up, went off adventuring and were never seen again.

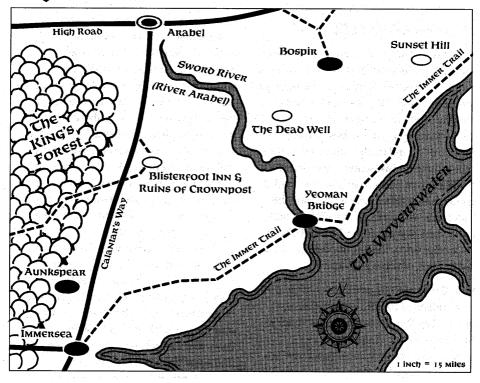
When Jathos grew tired of slaying wouldbe thieves and too old to enjoy swinging his hammer all day, the mint was removed to Suzail, and soldiers took apart the smithy to be sure that no coins had been forgotten over the years. They found nothing, but every year in Aunkspear some fortunate folk find a few "free coins" when tilling.

The local inn is named after a lucky plow used by a local farmer that turned up buried pots of coins at least three times, allowing its owner to retire young and rich. That farmer Thallos Indemeir, died some 20 years ago under mysterious circumstances. He was found sitting in his favorite chair, pipe in hand, but his mouth and lungs were full of water, as if he'd drowned! No trace of his savings were ever found. The Indemeir fields, now owned by a closemouthed farmer by the name of Chryth, are nowhere near the site of the former mint.

Alaethe also had a daughter whom she kept hidden after her sons vanished. That daughter, Crownhilde, later married into the Korvan family. Today the Korvan carpentry shop is called Royal Blood Carvers & Carpentry in her honor.

Aunkspear is also the place to buy gray





geese, if you've a mind to. Local breeder Ambratha Suren rears the largest, tastiest, and most heavily feathered such birds in all Cormyr. She also smokes a truly fierce pipe, and I saw her hurl a pranksome farm hand twice her size over a fence and into the duck pond with my own eyes!

### Places of Interest in Aunkspear

### Shops

Royal Blood Carvers & Carpentry Carpenters and Woodcarvers

This sawdust-choked mess of barns and timber is home to the ever-busy eight Korvan brothers. They make adequate stools, chairs,

and chests, and whittle hideous little dancing dwarves as ornaments to the be sold to the tasteless and given as gifts to the unwary.

# INNS The Golden Plow

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The plow is an adequate roadhouse, though the roast goose is—as might be expected—excellent. The taproom is pleasant and serves good ale, but neither the atmosphere nor the drink challenges the eye nor excites the mind. The Plow is a good place for a restful sleep if you get lodgings at the back, away from the road. Beware taking southern rooms where the rumble of carts and other noises from late arrivals can be heard most nights through.



### BListerfoot Inn

This inn stands east of the grassy ruins of Crownpost, a fortified stable on the road between Immersea and Arabel. Crownpost was once a base for Purple Dragons defending the grasslands of the realm and later a staging stable for war wizards, king's messengers, and Purple Dragons riding Calantar's Way in haste. Here tired mounts were swapped for fresh ones and exhausted travelers could find a safe bunk for the night. Crownpost consisted of two rings of grass-covered earthen banks with a ditch between them and a palisade crowning the inner ring. The palisade encircled a well, a barracks, and stables.

The fortress was abandoned 20-odd winters ago after a violent lightning storm that may not have been born of natural causes raked it with repeated lightning strikes. The lightning burned down and blasted apart all the buildings to reveal hitherto-hidden iron doors of ancient and massive make that had been hidden in the stable cellars.

The doors led into a subterranean wizards' lair of vast size but unknown location—one chamber is linked to the next by means of *gates*. The lair was the home or prison of many enchanted creatures, and they erupted into Cormyr. Only a desperate whelming of the war wizards saved the realm from becoming a mass graveyard roamed by killing things.

In the titanic battle between the war wizards and the enchanted creatures, the first known wild magic area in Cormyr was created. Its perilous effects govern Crownpost to this day, and strange monsters of all sorts roam the area Flying chimerae seem to predominate, but all shapes have been reported. All of the creatures are able to

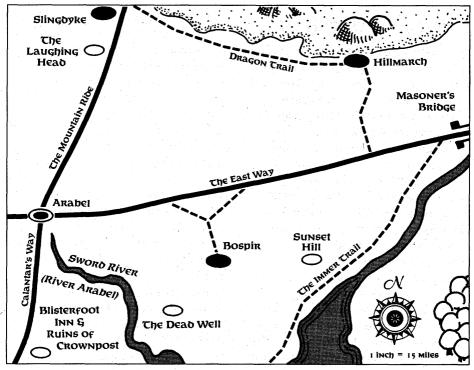
phase into or out of visible, solid existence.

The lair beneath the ruined fortress is so vast that after over 20 years of diligent work the war wizards have still not finished exploring it. A staff of power and a staff of swarming insects are known to have been brought out of this place by war wizard exploration teams as well as many chests of gems and gold coins to bolster the royal treasury. It's also confirmed that several war wizards perished in traps in the underground lair, though exploration teams are still sent down there every spring.

All of this has made Crownpost a shunned place. The farmer who owned the next hill to the east, one Buer Eltagar, hit upon the idea of opening an inn to house the traffic Crownpost had serviced and the explorers now coming to search the ruined fortress. Despite several lean early years, the Blisterfoot Inn has been a success. Its popularity took off after Eltagar journeyed to Suzail and Arabel to advertise it, handing out free maps with offers of hall-price stopover bills to the first 40 mapbearers to show up at his doors. Today traffic on Calantar's Way hurries past the monsterhaunted hill, warned by signboards telling of the raiding monsters and by numerous grave markers that show the fates of some who scoffed at such things. A side trail swings around the haunted heights of Crownpost in a wide loop and links the Blisterfoot Inn with the main road.

Eltagar's original inn was simply his largest and best barn, but the innkeeper has proved brilliant at promoting his establishment over the years. First, he gave it its memorable name. "Blisterfoot Inn" sticks in peoples' minds. Merchants from as far away as the Vilhon and even Amn and Chessenta who hear of it remember it. Next, Eltagar hit





on the map advertising idea and has since used more recent poster campaigns in nearby cities, portraying the Blisterfoot as a place at which young folk in love meet and frolic. Then Eltagar came up with his best promotional scheme ever. The farmer hit upon the idea of luring artisans fed up with the high costs of living in Suzail and Marsember to his inn by offering to build them free accommodation and give them free access to water and grazing land. Eltagar sold the artisans their shops for 1 gp each long ago but has always refused to sell any land to a potential rival innkeeper.

Over the years, a little walled village of artisans (silversmiths, potters, armorers, carpenters, and glassblowers) has grown up around the inn and attracted trade to it. Everyone who wants to do business with the artisans stays at the inn and drinks at the Wizard's Pit tavern, which is run by Eltagar's sons, Orbril and Brendeen, and named for the dangerous Crownpost lair. About 80 folk dwell at the Blisterfoot Inn village year-round. At the height of trade season, minstrels, horse dealers, and porters show up and are hired on, and the resident population increases to 130 or so.

Eltagar's daughter Arlareene, posing as an agent for a variety of shadowy merchants (whom I suspect are all Eltagar himself), has been quietly buying up all the farmland she can around the Blisterfoot and using it to grow food for the inn. Not only does this bolster the inn's food supply, it prevents any competitors from building an inn, stables, or shops outside the village and undercutting the slowly



but steadily rising Blisterfoot prices.

In recent years Eltagar has been hiring mages of minor power to instruct him in the rudiments of magic with an eye to protecting himself. There are rumors that he's been making deals with the war wizards to defend his moneymaking inn. In return, they are to be given lodgings to use for covert activities such as the continuing exploration of the Wizard's Pit. I look forward with interest to see what this cunning man gets into next.

### Places of Interest in Blisterfoot Inn

Shops
The Arrow in Flight
Bowyer and Fletcher

This tiny shop is the home of an expert archer, Shargla Quarraen, who retired from Purple Dragon service to become an accomplished bowyer and fletcher. Shargla works each day through, patiently making arrows from stock cut for her by half-elf partners. A visitor to her shop can almost always choose from several score of full quivers and a dozen or more bows of varying sizes and types. (A full Cormyrean battle quiver holds 21 shafts.)

Shargla defends herself with the aid of six enchanted *flying daggers*. One is sheathed down her bodice, and the other five are normally hidden among the rafters and shelves of her shop. They fly to strike foes at her silent mental command and have laid low several thieves over the years.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Black Bottle Pottery

Potter

This dusty shop is crammed with shelves of pots, jugs, and jars. Most are plain, sturdy everyday ware, but there are a smattering of fine-looking show items. The trademark black bottles sold here are triple-thick, almost-unbreakable belt flasks whose outsides are sealed with a glossy black glaze whose making is a trade secret. At 1 sp, such flasks are a bargain. They come with corks and strips of sealing gum, as do the large transport jugs that are the shop's most popular items. Merchants buy the transport jugs by the hundreds for use in caravan trade of bulk wine and oil.

Three gnome families own and run this shop. The working head of the place seems to be a long-bearded elderly gnome by the name of Tharthose, but he is known to all as "Tar-nose" because of his large and dark proboscis. If you're offered a delivery date that seems too late for your purposes, talk to Tar-nose—and tell them Volo sent you.

#### Borgil's Bold Buckles

Bucklemaker

5 5 5 5

This tiny shop is the abode of Alam Borgil, a bucklemaker from distant Icewind Dale who never tires of telling folk how lucky they are to be in a realm that gets *warm* some of the time. Borgil's shop is crammed with buckles of all sorts, from bone toggles to elaborate, curlicued, metal cummerbund

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>These animated weapons strike at foes Shargla concentrates on.

Flying Daggers (6): AC 5; MV Fl 21 (A); HD 1+1; hp 9 ea.; THACO 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4; SA can strike creatures hit only by +2 or better magical weapons (+2 to attack; no damage bonus); SD Shargla's control over them cannot be affected by any spell or psionic means; SZ T (6"); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65.



bosses that conceal tiny knives and coin purses. Alam and his large family make everything and merchants have taken to buying up fistfuls of his best buckles for sale in Sembia. As a sideline, Alam's wife Halya makes and sells tallow dipped candles.

### The Crystal Wyvern Glassblower

The Wyvern is a nightmare for clumsy folk to visit because of the breakable beauty on all sides. (Watch out behind yourself if you're wearing a scabbarded blade!) This cluttered shop has only one display, but it's a spectacular one: an exquisitely crafted and polished 3-footlong model of a wyvern turns slowly and endlessly in randomly directed stateliness in midair in the center of the shop. The wyvern is magically levitated, animated, and lit by an internal blue-white glow. It presides over a workplace littered with glittering glass dust and fragments. Here Anablasker Thurim and his daughter Teska blow glass lamps, figures, candleholders, dishes, and hooded ovals that they subsequently coat with silver to make fine mirrors. If the Thurims pull on one of several fine cords, they can upend a cage of deadly glass shards on thieves who are leaving by the door.

#### Erik Longeye, Helms and Hilts Specialized Armorer

The short-tempered, brilliant armorer Erik Longeye hails from the High Dale, where he developed speed and skill in crafting helms at his father's armory. He now—for stiff fees—makes custom helms and personalized sword hilts. The sword hilts are fitted to finished blades brought to him.

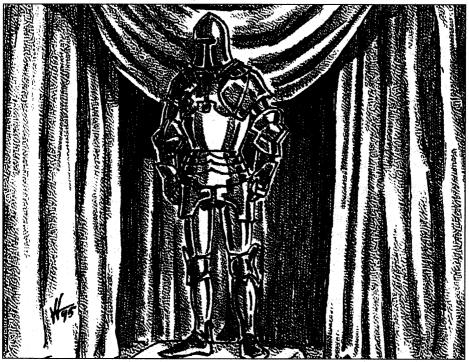
The nobles of Cormyr love Erik's work. The horns, wings, and snoutlike visors of Erik's helms are quite striking. His work not only makes an exclusive fashion statement, but since it features the badge of the noble who commissioned it, it makes the noble seem wealthy and discourages thieves. Erik gives the nobles swift results, his style is debonair and unique, and his work is not only fashionable but hard to dispose of if stolen. Where—in Cormyr at least—would you find a buyer for a particular noble's weapon?

#### Hornscars Armory

Armorer's Shop

This noisy, busy place is a traditional armorers' shop adorned with hanging suits of full plate armor that are widely rumored to be helmed horror guardians that Eldram Hornscars can animate with a single word. (He actually does so every night to leave them on sleepless guard.) A staff of a dozen smiths, most of them Hornscars's sons, is kept busy turning out shields, gauntlets, and body armor for the Purple Dragons, nobles, other customers who show up to place personal orders, and arms merchants active around the Inner Sea lands. The Purple Dragons have a standing order for a set number of pieces a year in accordance with King Azoun's preparedness policies for arms and armor. Hornscars work can readily be identified by the Hornscars stamp on each piece that looks like a pair of bull's horns. It's not cheap, but it is good work.





Jarn's Place
Woodcarver

A smell of fresh-cut cedar pervades this shavings-strewn shop. Here Ubargh Jarn crafts stools, beds, strongchests, and other practical everyday items, from crutches to buckets. He even does emergency wagon repairs out on the road or takes worn or crippled wagons in trade as partial payment for new carts and sledges of his own making.

Jarn has two stone sheds where his wagons and other large items are stored. He employs over 20 woodcarvers. Jarn's skill is comparable to the best workaday carpenters of Waterdeep and the cities of Amn. His specialties are finely finished hand-carried cases and stand-up wardrobes.

#### The Silver Feather

Silversmith

This tall, narrow shop boasts three floors crammed with silver jewelry, from tiny nose rings and snuff boxes to massive chandeliers as tall as a man. Many of the chandeliers hang in the center of the shop's central stairwell. One is a beckoning mermaid of breathtaking beauty and lifelike appearance that I'd have in my own home in an instant if I'd 4,000 gp to spare.

Belert Massingham crafts all of this beauty on the premises. He specializes in pectorals for ladies to wear on grand occasions and in sculpted figurines of ladies in somewhat smaller than life size (which are usually affixed to newels to astonish—and in some cases scandalize—guests). Belert



protects his wealth by undisclosed means. I suspect that he's purchased an expensive spellweb or similar magic to link several wands that are mounted at various locations around the shop to his command so they can be fired simultaneously and without being touched by him.

### Taverns The Wizard's Pit



This rather dull, overly clean and bright tavern is divided into curtained booths. It is that rare thing: a drinking spot that it's safe to take prudish folk and small children into. A bored-looking trio of minstrels play soft background music ceaselessly to mask the conversations, and I swear the barkeeper slips sleep-inducing powders into the "last drinks" of overly aggressive drinkers to sink them into quiet slumber.

This somnolent atmosphere makes the Pit a great place to relax or to meet and talk business, for which purposes I highly recommend it. For hearing lively tales or gossip, enjoying a sing-along, brawling, or relishing the company of ladies who like evenings out, it's a disaster. I heard one adventurer say to another as they both left: "I felt like I was in a temple. Let's go somewhere where we can roll in the dirt."

### INNS The Blisterfoot Inn

HERE BUSH

Eltagar's pride and joy has come a long way since it was his best barn. Now it's a huge, recently built stone building of many shuttered windows, corner turrets, and splendid canopied beds. Glowing globes fitted with their own pullcord curtains to darken the rooms for slumber illuminate the best rooms. Fireplaces adorn every third room, and the chimneys rise up the outside walls of the Blisterfoot like a row of stone spears.

The kitchens serve superbly prepared but rather bland fare. Roasts or geese accompanied by rice-and-sauce dishes that are heavy on the diced carrots, potatoes, greens, and mushrooms are a typical meal. I took refuge in the garlic butter and basket of hot crumbly rolls that's served to each diner. Expect no culinary delights and no disastrous meals and you won't be surprised.

You can eat in your room or in one of four small, cozy dining rooms rather than in a single cavernous common room.

When I was there, visiting Purple Dragons had taken over one such dining room entirely, but I did notice that one of the other dining rooms held quiet, solitary diners and the loud and hearty were gathered in yet another.

The professional escorts missing from the Wizard's Pit tavern can be found here, on an upper floor of their own that's furnished with huge hanging red and amber candle lamps shaped like giant diamonds, lots of curtains, fur rugs, and large cushions. There are even two back stairs to allow guests to visit the escorts discreetly and a third that avoids the escorts' apartments and leads only to a private meeting room that can be rented (and the door barred) for long and sensitive negotiations. (There are rumors that the inn rents seats in a secret passage that allows eavesdropping on the meeting room for very high fees.)



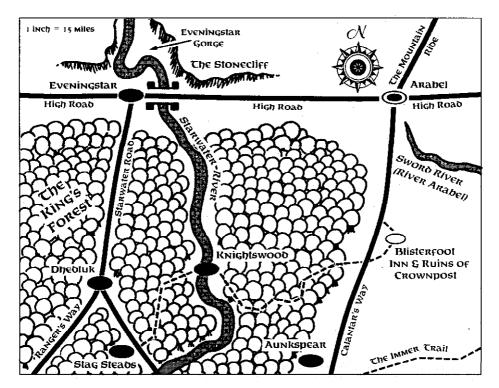
### Dhedluk

This village of 370-odd folk stands at the meeting of Starwater Road and Ranger's Way, a short trail through dense forest that links Dhedluk with Waymoot to the southwest. Some upcountry folk still refer to this community by its former name of Dheolur, which it was called after the noble family who once dwelt here. That clan no longer exists after siding against the Crown once too often. Dhedluk is the surname of a local woodcutter who stood against them and was made king's lord of the place in recognition of his loyalty.

Dhedluk today is a pretty place of log cottages nestling in the trees, tiny fern gardens, and small crop allotments. The expansion of cleared land is strictly regulated (in recent years, that really means "forbidden"), and the village is surrounded by bogs, so Dhedluk remains a waystop community of skilled woodcarvers and herbalists. Three small quail ranches and another that rears imported boobries operate in the village. Some of the boobries wander freely around the village, keeping it clear of snakes and other vermin.

#### Landmarks

Most travelers know Dhedluk for its only visible industry: the Blushing Maiden inn. It's run by the affable if hard-nosed king's lord of Dhedluk, the retired adventurer Thiombur. I like to chat with the





man; he's always good for one more colorful tale about his days in the Fair Fortune Freeswords, who seem to have tamed most of Tunland and the Stonelands in their day-though both areas have regrettably returned to a perilous state since. Be aware, though, that every word said to Thiombur may find its way forthwith to the ears of King Azoun, Vangerdahast, or one of their agents. Moreover, I suspect there's a gate linking the Royal Court with Dhedluk. In several cases I've heard of, senior court officials appeared on the scene, seemingly out of nowhere, when Thiombur needed their authority to deal with rather antisocial Thayan and Zhentish trade delegations.

Dhedluk is truly beautiful, a place of dappled sunlight, flittering and calling birds, and gigantic trees girt with mosses. A lot of dreamy nobles and seasoned Purple Dragons alike seem to retire here. With the shortage of available homes, prices of cottages here tend to be higher than those of prime-location shops in Suzail—I've heard of small stone and timber huts going for 16,000 lions! Dhedluk's beauty also seems to captivate Cormyreans with odd ideas: It is home both to the Women of the Woods and a sinister underground cult known as the High Hunt.

The Women of the Woods are outlaws whom King Azoun tolerates and even befriends. They're under royal protection, but Vangerdahast has obviously issued orders that they be constantly watched and harried—in contradiction of the king. These women believe females should rule Cormyr and all realms. They have eluded the clutches of

locals, who long ago wearied of their raids, because they inhabit the ruins of Meliyekur's Magical Museum, a crumbling old manor house that was turned into a museum of magic by its last owner, an eccentric noble. It stands in the depths of the forest west of the village.

The Museum is protected by magical traps that levitate and paralyze intruders. Their motionless bodies float forever on display in midair, freezing in winter, rotting the following summer, and persisting as skeletons thereafter. One of the reasons the authorities tolerate the continued existence of this dangerous semiruin is that it gives foes of Cormyr something to explore. It has slain many a young and ambitious agent of the Zhentarim, the Cult of the Dragon, and the Red Wizards of Thay.

The Women of the Woods have made full use of the Museum's magical items, and at least one of them is a mage of some prowess. From a safe distance, I saw one bathing in a forest pool. When a Purple Dragon burst upon her with drawn sword, intending to capture her, she calmly crushed him with a huge tree that she uprooted and hurled with one wave of her hand!

The Women of the Woods steal food, drink, clothing, jewelry, and useful items such as axes, pots, pans, and knives during their raids on Dhedluk. It's thought they have a captive deepspawn<sup>5</sup> in the Mansion; certainly the Women never lack for venison and don't bother to hunt anything. Purple Dragon patrols cautiously skirting the Mansion often report encountering the smell of roasting venison wafting through the trees.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See the Monstrous Manual<sup>TM</sup> for a discussion of deepspawn.



The Women are at least two dozen strong and are led by Vandara "the Vixen" Thulont, a lass of wealthy Suzailan merchant birth who once loved Thiombur. The breakup of their romance drove Vandara to recruit other women dissatisfied with their men and found their woodland fellowship. The traveler is warned that Thiombur doesn't take kindly to gueries or talk about Vandara. Further, Purple Dragons regard questions about King Azoun's relationship with the Women as some sort of secret of the realm to be sharply guarded! Is Vandara of royal blood? Is Azoun her sire, as well as her sire? I'd be interested in hearing from anyone who learns or is willing to talk about this matter further-in the interests of updating this entry for future editions of this guidebook, of course.6

The other notable outlaw organization active around Dhedluk does not enjoy royal favor or protection. The High Hunt is a decadent cult embraced by certain old families in Cormyr. It numbers some honored nobility among its members. Cult members firmly believe the vitality of the land can only be renewed by sacrificial slayings of Cormyreans of noble blood—at least one annually. A sacrifice need not be a willing victim and is hunted like a stag through the King's Forest by the cult members on a moonlit night.

Such hunts traditionally begin in Dhedluk. To stop Thiombur and the Purple Dragons from discovering them, recent victims have been treated with silence and repulsion magics to drive them forth from the village speedily with-

out raising an alarm. In former times, more than one victim tried to hide in the village, and the hunt soon became a brawl through the night streets as Purple Dragons and travelers or adventurers roused from their sleep in the inn fought cultists. King Azoun outlawed the cult early in his reign, when it became apparent that certain unscrupulous nobles were using it as an excuse for murdering rivals. The severe penalties for kidnapping and confining nobles for any reason also date from this judgment.

Some High Hunt members use masks decorated with stag antlers, and the cult symbol is a point-down vertical dagger trailing three drops of blood off in an arc to the left. Fanatical cultists prick each other to draw at least three drops of blood whenever they meet on cult business, which is usually to discuss who is to be the next sacrifice. Travelers are warned not to consort with folk they believe to be cult members and never to let on they've seen any cult rituals or meetings. The first is a crime, but the second usually brings swift death at the hands of cult members bent on protecting their privacy.

### Places of Interest in Dheòluk

INNS
The Blushing Maiden

SSSS BARR

The Blushing Maiden is the sole landmark of Dhedluk. This rustic wayhouse

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Before Elminster took an editorial cleaver to Volo's original text, it was liberally studded with these not-so-sly references to later versions of the guide. Volo obviously believes in selling the same work over and over again. The Old Mage merely lifted an eyebrow and then winked when asked if Azoun might be Vandara's father.



sprawls through the trees, its (sound-proofed!) private rooms offering breath-taking views of forest scenery. Each room has its own fully equipped bathroom as luxurious as those of some inns in fabled Waterdeep, and pelt rugs of (mostly) owlbear and wolf fur are everywhere.

One of the long, dark passages in the inn has fully a hundred paces of one wall covered with a single huge forest hunt tapestry of exquisite workmanship. This hanging, reputed to be elven in origin, glows with its own enchanted light. Some folk say distant stags woven into the scenes move about from time to time. Others, the good mage Elminster among them, say the tapestry holds many gates to and from other places in Faerûn and even other worlds!<sup>7</sup> These hidden doors are usable only by those who know how to evoke their magic and are accessed by stepping into (through) the weave at the right spot.

The Blushing Maiden is named for the now-dead leader of the Freeswords, the sorceress Aradaera "Ravensong" Tinshar, Thiombur's first great love. Her phantom image-crafted by the best Sembian illusionists whom Thiombur paid over 50,000 gp!—appears in the entryway from time to time, dark-eyed and smiling, in a pearly gown that leaves little to the imagination of the viewer. In life, Aradaera was a fighting mage of great skill and even greater boldness, and she once fireballed her way into a beholder's lair, coolly debated with the eye tyrant until her fellow Freeswords were in position to attack, and then charged the monster!

Aradaera's nickname comes from her favorite alternative shape: a singing raven. She adopted it after seeing the Simbul, Witch-Queen of Aglarond, swoop into Azoun's presence in raven form to confront the astonished monarch over a mistaken interpretation of a trade treaty between Cormyr and Aglarond. The Simbul explained her own view curtly, dragooned the young king into accepting additional clarifying wording on the spot, and departed, pausing in raven form to correct a minstrel who'd been singing all this while by singing the selection herself. Thiombur was also present at this incident since Aradaera and he were securing the Freeswords charter at the time, and he never tires of telling this tale. One awed servant told me that several winters ago he was telling it to a group of travelers when one of them said softly, "Aye, that's just how it befell. You have a good memory and an honest tongue," and then turned from the shape of a fat merchant to that of a raven, sang a snatch of song while Thiombur turned white, and flew out the door and away into the night!

Thiombur is good for more than stories. He knows the woods well and can direct interested guests to good berry patches and clear springs, warn them of dryad locations and where the Women of the Wood are most active, and even mount rescue parties if patrons request them before setting out on trips.

The Maiden is a good inn and justly popular. Many merchants take the Starwater Road rather than Calantar's Way just so they can stop here and at the Tankard in Eveningstar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster: Aye, this time he's the telling truth. One *can* reach other planes, continents of Faerûn, and even locales in the Underdark. Elves did make the tapestry, but who they were and for what purpose it was made, none of ye need know. Like Volo, I've now said rather more than enough.



## Espan

This village of 460 or so citizens is home to Stormhaven House, a secret college of the war wizards,8 but is known to most Cormyreans as the home of Quiral o' the Blades, a swordsmith of renown, Stormhaven House is a fortified manor house that stands overlooking all Espar on its own wood-fringed meadow plateau west of the village. Hippogriffs are stabled there for the use of war wizards and court officials, and the college is said to be guarded by both formidable creatures and by wards of deadly power.9 This college is where fledgling war wizards receive instruction in the history of Cormyr and its current problems and politics, practice the use of spells newly taught them and the magical items used by many war wizards<sup>10</sup> (an astonishing number of which seem to have found their ways into homes and shops in the village), and are disciplined when necessary by Vangerdahast.

Few Cormyreans realize Espar is where the famous Battlestorm Beer is brewed by the aging brothers Thorl and Buirylagh Battlestorm. These two men see to the kitchens and cleaning around the college. Villagers refer to the college as the Brewery because they think the kegs of bitters bearing the Battlestorm name are the best thing it produces.

In recent years, a chance find by prospectors operating in the Storm Horns west of Espar created a rush of miners eager to hew emeralds by the cartload from the peaks and grow rich. Few found anything worth the taking, and their numbers attracted monsters that still roam the foothills, making this perilous territory for lightly armed travelers.

### Landmarks

Espar is a quiet farming community that venerates Chauntea and Helm. Its local lord, Hezom, is a priest of the Guardian God. Sentinel Rock is an impressive shrine to Helm. The god's altar, adorned with a sword of dancing that animates by itself to defend any faithful of Helm who are present as well as all offerings left at the altar, is located in a cave in the heart of the rock itself. Pilgrims have been known to journey here to touch the Vigilant Blade, which won't attack a true worshiper of Helm, and ask for the god's blessing on their ventures, unborn children, and the like.

Most folk come to Espar to see the retired adventurer Quiral, who survived service in several adventuring bands—most notably the Company of the Bound Dragon—before settling here to a life of farming, reading, and crafting blades of outstanding quality. Quiral particularly likes the romantic novels penned in Amn and pays highly—up to 20 gp a book—for them. He can be found at his home, Everswords House, on a duskwood-cloaked knoll just west off the Way of the Dragon, at the north end of Espar.

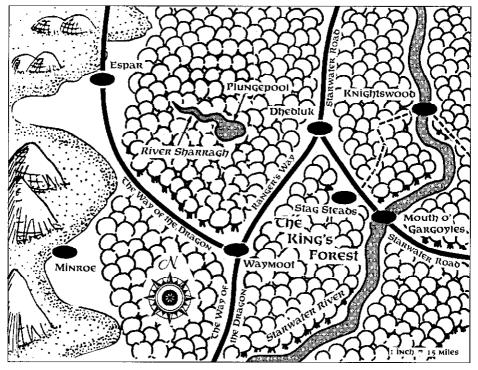
Quiral's bladecrafting hobby, however, is what attracts most of his visitors. Before seeking his services, be warned that Quiral only makes a blade if he likes the person who wants it, if that person agree to Quiral's price and conditions for construction, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Elminster: Well, I guess it's not secret any more now, is it? (Ye dolt.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>For some powers of Cormyrean wards see Appendix III. Previous guidebooks in this series have folly set forth the usual spells used to create and the usual side effects of wards.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>For more details of such items, please refer to Appendix III of this guidebook.





if the project interests Quiral. The prices Quiral charges are stiff: typically 4,000 gp and up per blade. He's mastered the *everbright* dwarven magic<sup>11</sup> and can prepare a blade to exacting specifications for a mage to enchant. Everyone who does manage to procure a weapon Quiral has made reports that the balance and weight are perfect, the weapon feels like a part of them, and they prefer his blade to all others.

Espar is also notable as the birthplace of several of the famous Knights of Myth Drannor, including the widely respected Florin Falconhand. And just as Espar was when Florin was young, the village is the home of many rangers, half-elven folk,

and human elf friends, though the numbers of elves dwelling in the King's Forest to the east has dwindled steadily.

Another well-known legend of Cormyr few folk realize is associated with out-of-the-way Espar is that of the Four Floating Crowns. These are "four circlets of gold, bedecked with emeralds as large as a man's thumb" that appear in midair above the Way of the Dragon just south of Espar at random times. Anyone who touches any of the crowns, which usually drift in a lazy circular orbit at about chest height above the road, vanishes. Legend says such people are snatched away to "far, strange, and perilous places." This

<sup>11</sup> Everbright keeps a blade from rusting or tarnishing and also helps it keep its edge much better.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>This description is the in words of the now-dead sage Hurdiver of Arabel. The quotation about the crowns' functioning that follows is also his.



gate resembles the work of the Sword Heralds<sup>13</sup> but is far older, and its origin and purpose are in fact unknown. Sages have written that it transports folk to a wide variety of locales in Faerûn.

One lady who fell afoul of this gate while riding on the road some centuries ago was Aglara Spurbright. That's why the minor noble family of Spurbright, whose 20 or so miles of small tenanted farms lie along either side of the Way of the Dragon just north of Espar, has a circle of four crowns at the heart of its arms.

## Places of Interest in Espar

Shops
Ondrar's Scroll Shop
Scrollseller

This small, dusty cottage is the only shop of interest and value in Espar, though the village also features a smith of indifferent skills and some farmers who can manage wagon repairs for stricken travelers. The presence of the war wizard college explains this unlikely locale for a shop selling scrolls. Its proprietor, the old sage Ondrar Middlefast, was once servant to a powerful Sembian merchant family ere they offended the wrong rival and were speedily made extinct.

Ondrar collects all sorts of writings and sells them. In his shop, the traveler can find diaries of old Cormyr, spell scrolls, alchemists' notes, priestly orders of prayer, instructional chapbooks on everything from how best to cook an ettin's foot to how to make a golem, musical scores

from a dozen kingdoms, almanacs from lost and forgotten cities, old maps of the Dragonreach lands, and more. Ondrar gladly guides customers through the contents of his shop—and believe me, he knows *precisely* what's on every scrap of vellum or parchment in his shop. He can find it without delay, too. However, you must buy to read—period. There's no browsing without buying.

Thankfully, everything is fairly affordable, though Ondrar has little magic of any real consequence. Writings typically cost 5 sp per page, maps 25 to 50 gp each, and scrolls usually run 500 gp per spell or more. Spells of 6th or greater level are bought up by the college—to keep them out of the hands of honest folk, Ondrar often gloomily observes.

# INNS The Watchful Eye

iiii ooo yyy

Though the village is too small to have a restaurant or tavern, Espar is proud of its lone inn, which is a good enough roadhouse for such an isolated backwater. The name of the inn comes from the sign of the god Helm, and a visitors find it as orderly and careful inside as most temples to that god. It's also a trifle plain and sparse in decor, with plain linens, no tapestries or paintings adorning the walls, and simple, solid furniture.

The staring eye on the signboard ensures that the traveler won't miss the place. The stable care is superior, and the dining room serves too-bland but generous portions of good food. On the whole, the Eye is safe and adequate, if unexciting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>See Appendix II of this guidebook.



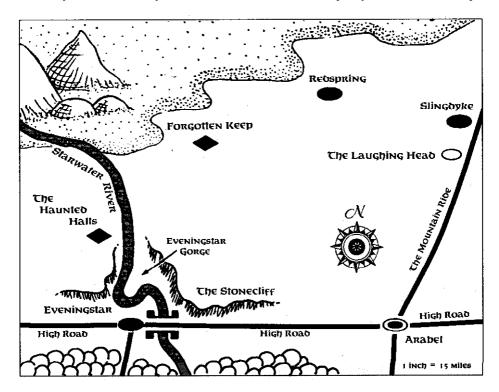
## Eveningstar

This picturesque farming village of 400 or so folk stands where the Starwater Road meets the High Road and the latter crosses the Starwater River by means of a broad stone bridge. Small and quiet, Eveningstar is a prosperous farmers' market and travelers' waystop. It lies across the mouth of a rocky gorge that carries the Starwater River down into Cormyr from its source.

The Eveningstar Gorge provides the only easy route up into the dangerous mountains north of the Forest Kingdom. It's the only major break in a craggy limestone escarpment that stands like a wall along the High Road from Tyrluk to near Arabel and bars easy northward expansion for Cormyr. There are many tracks and

scrambles up and down the Stonecliff, but no other routes by which mounted people or livestock less agile than goats and sheep can pass from Cormyr to the high moors of the Stonelands and vice versa. The gorge itself is thickly grown with thickets and scrub woodland and is the favorite playground of bolder local children, who in season pick many baskets of berries there.

Eveningstar itself is full of trees and gardens. The village rises out of the surrounding farms "like an orchard with buildings in it," as Elminster says. It is dominated by the Stonecliff and the prosperous fields of the House of the Morning, a handsome spired temple of Lathander that sprawls in the mouth of the gorge. No other temples or shrines exist in Eveningstar, but the local lord allows temporary shrines to be set up





in the market for up to three days (dawn of the first to sunset of the last). Eveningstar is one of the bucolic beauty spots of Cormyr, a place of soft, glorious sunsets and sunrises and gentle, starlit summer skies.

Eveningstar is ruled by Lord Tessaril Winter, a mage turned warrior who wields much magic. <sup>14</sup> She is perceptive, considerate, and utterly loyal to Azoun. Some folk in Cormyr say she's a little *too* friendly with him, but although Azoun often visits Eveningstar when he wants to cast the cares of ruling aside for a time, I'm assured by senior war wizards that the time when Azoun and Tessaril were paramours precedes the king's wedding. These days they're just good friends.

Evenor farmers keep sharrada<sup>15</sup> and sheep in the walled common land of the High Pasture on the edge of the Stonelands plateau. The farmers gather once every six days for a market, bringing produce that is often snapped up by visiting caravans. Eveningstar produces wine, parchment, wool, milk, cheese, eggs, poultry, mutton, beans, carrots, and parsnips.

The village is a favorite stopover for overland caravans. Most caravan masters are good friends of Dunman Kiriag, owner of the Lonesome Tankard, one of the best inns to be found anywhere. On many soft summer evenings, dozens of caravan masters can be seen fishing from the Starwater bridge, enjoying a pipe or two, or strolling the evening streets. Even more caravan guards are often seen bathing in one of the Starwater's swimming holes to drive off the dust and sweat of the road, then putting on their best and slipping out to the Low

Lantern tavern, dance hall, and theater for some late-night fun.

Eveningstar remains one of the favorite haunts of King Azoun, who comes here cloaked in magical disguise by Vangerdahast to relax. Vangerdahast usually accompanies him. The king enjoys a stroll, a quaff or two at the Lonesome Tankard, and an evening of dancing at the Lantern. More than once he has been moved to shed his disguise, usually upon finding Tessaril dancing, too.

The locals regard Azoun as a fellow Evenor villager with respect and affection. Zhentarim agents with poisoned steel once attacked Azoun in the Lantern but were set upon barehanded by everyone there. The patrons rushed to form a human shield ring around the king until Tessaril and her Purple Dragons, alerted by excited youths up past their bedtimes, arrived to rout the intruders.

Visitors used to the late or all-night hours kept in many cities are often disappointed to find that, except for the inns, the Low Lantern, and the temple, Eveningstar completely closes down soon after dusk. Farm folk hereabouts eat heavily and go to bed early in order to rise with or before the dawn and get out into the fields again. Many nap at highsun, making the early afternoon another quiet time in the village.

## Landmarks

An oddity found on occasion in the trees and streets of Eveningstar are tressym: small, fluffy, winged cats. These cute, mischievous little terrors are semiwild and thought to be the result of long-ago wiz-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>She once pretended to be a man called Tessar the Mage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Sharrada are long-horned, hardy beef cattle covered with shaggy fur. They can survive in harsher cold than humans.



## Eveningstar Map Key

- 1. The Lonesome Tankard (inn)
- 2. Eveningstar Hall (meeting house, Purple Dragon barracks for visiting forces, jail)
- Ruldo Stables (horses bought, sold, rented; stabling space for the Tankard)
- 4. Market square
- **5.** Ashnairn's Fine Clothing (shop)
- 6. Ebbard Highsong, Butcher (shop)
- **7.** The Old Boot (wagonmaker and harness shop)
- Residence of Auldo Morin, village clerk and purser (also Purple Dragon barracks for 9-man local detachment)
- 9. Tessaril's Tower (Lord's residence)
- 10. Orsborg's Adornments (home, shop)
- **11.** The House of the Morning (temple to Lathander)
- 12. Temple Granaries
- 13. Temple "Home" Fields
- **14.** Pillar Rock (local landmark; old tomb cave in base)
- 15. Redhand Pool
- 16. Deltar's Mill

- 17. High Pasture (common grazing land)
- 18. The Iron Hand (smithy)
- 19. The Golden Unicorn Inn
- 20. Baskar's Nook (print shop)
- **21.** Mother Tethos/Cordials, Herbs, Gentle Cures (physic shop; local midwife)
- 22. The Low Lantern (tavern, dance hall, theater)
- 23. Tethyr Hardware (shop)
- 24. Tethyr's Court (rooming house)
- 25. Uldar the Potter (home and shop)
- 26. The Silver Branch (shop)
- **27.** Olff's Rest (rooming house and carpentry shop; proprietor Roarel Olff)
- **28.** Eveningstar Bakery (home and shop; proprietress Urda Malo)
- 29. Ruin of the Welcoming Hand (inn)
- 30. South stables of Ladian Ruldo (see 3)
- **31.** Old Meg's Hut (ruin of dead crone's house; favorite children's play spot)
- **32.** Eveningstar Gorge (route to Haunted Halls)
- **33.** Residence of Syndair Thorn, Weaver and Dressmaker (also mage)

ardly experimentation. Villagers feed them and try to prevent the worst of their vandalism and aerial catfights, and the local farmers value their owl-like rodent control in the fields. Most of these flying cats lair in the gorge and hunt the farm fields night and day, avoiding local cats and dogs rather than fighting or tormenting them. A few mages have come seeking these creatures as familiars; Lord Tessaril has one.

Eveningstar currently features two inns, the Lonesome Tankard and the Golden Unicorn Inn, and two rooming houses. A third Evenor inn, the Welcoming Hand, burned down a decade ago and still hasn't been rebuilt. It was formerly Eveningstar's best—and best-known—inn. Its ruins stand across the High Road from the Lonesome Tankard, so visitors mistakenly seeking it won't have to go far to find alternative accommodation. One

rumor says that the fire that burnt the place down was caused by a fell beast from another plane summoned by night to the cellars of the Hand in a dark ritual. Other locals say the fire was caused by a careless manservant who shoveled live coals into the kindling bin when he was slinging ashes out of the hearth.

Of old, many mages dwelt near Eveningstar in the woods or in small, now-ruined towers or caves in or just north of the Stonecliff. Their spells and magic are still sought by many with high hopes. Aside from Lord Tessaril, however, the only other mage now living in Eveningstar is Syndair Thorn. She makes her living as a weaver and dressmaker.

Part of the way up the west side of Eveningstar Gorge is the entrance to the Haunted Halls, a subterranean stronghold built by dwarves long ago for the human







bandit-lord Rivior and since home to kobolds and worse. At least one adventuring band each summer comes to try its luck at gleaning treasures from the Haunted Halls; notably fewer stalwarts come to explore the Halls in winter.

Rivior was slain over 200 winters ago when Enchara, warrior-queen of the fledgling realm of Esparin (since absorbed into Cormyr), knowing Rivior's bandits to be short of food, tricked them out into the winter snows with a false caravan publicly rumored to be burgeoning with food and coins. Desperate for what they saw as easy pickings, the bandits swarmed from their lair and were slain to the last one. The deserted hold was soon home to monsters that were rumored to have been brought by evil Zhentarim mages who took up abode in the Hall to discourage intruders. The hold was often visited by adventuring bands seeking to win experience and fortune. The undead remains of some of these intrepid unfortunates gave the former bandit hold its present name.

Among the more famous tales of the Halls are the titanic battle between the young, unproven Knights of Myth Drannor and the evil mage Whisper. Exploring the Halls was the Knights' first real adventure. Another famous encounter played out at this site was the explosive confrontation between the Company of the Unicorn and a circle of nine levitating, fireball-casting, black-robed mages before the entrance to the Halls.

Despite continuing patrols, the Haunted Halls are still home to many dangerous monsters. The area near Eveningstar also has a continual problems with trolls, particularly to the east, in the troll caves traditionally known as the Caverns of the Claws.

## Places of Interest in Eveningstar

## Temples

### The House of the Morning

Under the leadership of Patriarch Charisbonde "Trueservant" Belon, this wealthy and influential temple complex to Lathander farms and invests in the new businesses and bold ventures of others with vigor and enthusiasm. The 28 priests under Belon include the wary sarcastic Jelde Asturien, a retired Knight of Myth Drannor who serves as the temple's secular liaison. Among his other duties, he tries to uncover fraud and misuse of Lathander's bounty by keeping an eye on folk who've taken temple money to aid them in their ventures. Jelde and his fellow senior priests command several powerful magical items and a willing work force of 170 resident lay followers.

They run a very successful farm that produces herbs, nuts, plants for use in scents and medicines, and enough food to see to all village and temple needs. The temple feeds and houses guests of most good and neutral faiths for a nightly fee. Healing services are performed unstintingly, but the fees are steep enough to see the entire temple through a lean decade, not just a bad year!

# Shops Baskar's Nook

Print Shop



This dusty crowded shop (a former granary) in the back streets of Eveningstar is the home and shop of Baskar Lendo, a tall but stooped, thin, nervous man whose failing eyesight makes him peer at everything like



an inquisitive bird. Baskar is a sage in the field of the history, folklore, and genealogies of the heartlands of Cormyr. He is a great font of knowledge about Cormyr's past and has made a special study of the deeds and misdeeds of nobles and adventurers.

In his print shop, Baskar makes and sells inks and parchment and produces handbills for hire. A sample of one of his handbills reads:

FOR HIRE: One Adventuring Band
Bold and capable.
No job too small.
Discretion guaranteed.
Proud of our charter!
Contact Thorl at the Low Lantern.

Baskar also produces a broadsheet paper, the Cormyr Clarion. This singlesheet paper makes fascinating reading for the visitor. It lays bare the current gossip and doings of the folk of Eveningstar, from who's been interviewed by Purple Dragons recently to who won the last game of jacks at the Tankard. It also features both news of upcoming local sales and events and a rather salacious rumors column whose snide comments are alone worth the 2-cp cost of the Clarion. For a fee (typically 5 gp per message), Baskar slips false or cryptic messages into this column, enabling folk to tip each other off about things without revealing their business to all. A sample of this might read: "Randor says the silverbeak's flown from its nest at last."

Deltar's Mill
Grist Mill and Baker

\* \* \*

Most northerly of Eveningstar's build-

ings, this large mill stands on the Starwater's west bank below Redhand Pool (the mill's millpond). The mill is surrounded by the house, vegetable garden, and grain warehouse of its proprietor, Deltar Tummarlin. He processes all grain and flour crops for surrounding farmers and bakes his own justly famous onion loaves. These foot-long, grub-shaped bread loaves are liberally spiced with groundroot, leeks, and onion. They're yours for 1 cp each, and they're best eaten with drippings while hot.

The Mill is also known for its ghost: It's haunted by the phantom of a noble lady drowned here long ago. She's given to following one man each night who's recently visited the mill. Dripping, she walks up to him, embraces him—reportedly a damp and chilly experience—and then says, "You're not my lord!" and vanishes.

Several subjects of this unusual haunting touch have said that they were aware of any undead around them<sup>16</sup> for a month or so thereafter, and some also received useful warning visions. Why these effects occur remains a mystery, but Deltar, whose wife died a decade ago, refuses to have the ghost eradicated and becomes furious with anyone who attacks it or attempts to destroy it-though the ghostly lady seems to ignore such efforts from most priests. He says he's grown quite used to her embraces. (If no man comes to the mill in a day, she appears to Deltar.) No one seems to recall who the lady's lord was. but local legend hints that her death was foul play.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>By this, they mean the type, number, and distance and direction away of each undead creature for some considerable distance.



# Ebbard Highsong, Butcher Butcher



One of three shops whose rears abut the market square, this brick building has a magnificent facade backed by an almost tumbled down smokehouse. Ebbard Highsong is widely respected as a generous man whose skill is such that he can butcher and hang something as large as a bull in a matter of minutes. He can also identify all sorts of odd creatures from bones, a handful of hair or scraps of hide, and sometimes even a bit of meat. How he came to be familiar with manticore meat and leucrotta livers is something he declines to discuss, but many adventurers and Crown investigators<sup>17</sup> have found his talents very useful. Ebbard works like a fiend at spring lambing and the fall slaughter.

# The Iron Hand Smithy



This busy smithy is the abode and pride of Master Armorer Dhurthal Ironhand, a man of few words, mighty thews, and magnificent flowing blond hair and mustache. Dhurthal works quickly, crafting gorgets, greaves, gauntlets, and shields when he hasn't orders to fill. Unless Azoun has whelmed a Purple Dragon army, he has a selection of such items for sale at all times. He's known for his gleaming *everbright* - treated plate armors, which are worn by many nobles of Cormyr, and his sideline: pewter pots. The pots are cast by his 'prentices whenever they've idle time.

At a word or sign from Dhurthal or any of his staff, several gleaming swords that hang high on the smithy walls fly to his defense. On several occasions, thieves who've tried to make off with these blades, even with magical aid, have been found dead when Dhurthal was nowhere near. Word is spreading of a possible guardian curse on the blades or on the smithy itself. 18

### The Old Boot

Wagonmaker and Harness Shop

\* \* \* \* \* \*

This wagon-making and harness shop is one of three local businesses run by the fat, greedy merchant Arbold Tethyr. (He also has a rooming house and a hardware store.) Arbold's prices are steep, but his skilled workers can do *very* quick wagon or harness repairs and fashion a custom conveyance or harness rig inside a tenday. Modifying an existing wagon for a new, per-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Oh yes, Cormyr has investigators into crimes and murders, and very good ones, too! Lord Aramael is particularly competent, following in the footsteps of Lord Dlarsea.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>According to Elminster, the four enchanted long swords have only three properties: They fly at MV Fl 14, in random point-first flights designed to circle any heat sources—such as living things—they encounter, turning their tips toward such sources. They glow with a blue-white *faerie fire*. They also hum or sing at random times and pitches.

They are powerless decoys. The real defenders of the smithy are four animated battle axes and an anvil. These weapons strike at anyone Dhurthal directs them to. They fly at MV Fl 16, are +2 to attack, and deal 1d8+2 points of damage (battle axes) or 2d8 points of damage (anvil). They can be commanded to trace, follow, and strike any beings carrying or wielding a decoy sword (at +4 to attack). The swords draw the anvil and axes unerringly to their presence. All of these animated items are AC 0 and can sustain 33 points of damage before they shatter. The anvil can shatter into two smaller, remnants with 10 hp each that continue to function separately until destroyed. The anvil fragments each cause 2d4 points of damage per successful blow.



sonalized look takes them four days or less. Many merchants have grumbled at paying 25 gp for a minor repair or 40 gp for something a little more serious, but they brightened when the work was done overnight or in the space of a few hours.

Arbold wisely leaves his workers to get on with things, confining himself to the role of grand financier. His staff includes two men who are experts in the making of wheels and runners of superior strength and durability. One is also the acknowledged expert in fashioning new axles and putting them in place on wagons without unloading or destroying all the cargo inside.

For an extra fee, Arbold's employees create hiding places in a wagon by hollowing out small cavities in posts or boards in such a way that only someone who knows their whereabouts is likely to find them. Typically, an adjacent board or bar must be removed to reveal the niche. This service typically costs 25 to 50 gp per niche, depending on its size.

# Orsborg's Adornments Barbering and Tattooing

Vilnar Orsborg provides body adornment services to Evenor citizens and visitors alike. His shop is situated in a prime location between the Lonesome Tankard and Tessaril's Tower. The shop is also his home; he lives upstairs.

Orsborg is a fat, waddling, cheery man whose loud clothes and louder speech conceal a calm competency at money matters, barbering, and the application of tattoos with some artistry. His skill with the money he earns is surprising. He's grown very wealthy through buying

and selling property all over Cormyr, and he owns almost an entire street in Suzail. (My Harper informant declined to identify which one.) He has an amusing manner of accentuating every third word or so as if scandalized at its utterance: "So of course I had to take the man's word! Ridiculous, I know, but what can one do?"

Ask local ladies to show you their Orsborg adornments and you're likely to get slapped. Their husbands, however, proudly display their own smaller depictions of gauntlets, family arms, crossed swords, and purple dragons—and tell you about whatever of Orsborg's work their wives sport. Orsborg's work has smooth, swirling curves and vivid hues and has even attracted the attention of distant Calishite satraps, who send a few of their folk every year to be tattooed.

Orsborg is also an expert perfumer. He is often called upon to identify obscure scents by Purple Dragons, outraged husbands, and curious adventurers. He typically charges 6 gp for this service but refunds the money if a smell baffles him.

## The Silver Branch

Objets d'Art

One of the shops on the main run along the north side of the High Road, the Silver Branch features a helmed horror guardian constructed only from the torso up. It floats above the shelves of merchandise to minimize damage.

This small, elegant establishment is a shop of quality that is increasingly popular with passing merchants looking for pricey gift items they can resell in Sembia, Iriae-



bor, or Amn. The shop stocks a wonderful selection of jewelry, art, glasswork, and fine silks from Mulhorand and locales even farther east. Among the jewelry, the delicate, locally made ladies' pieces of everbright silver, set with sapphires, are particularly nice. The art is a mixed bag. It seems to consist mainly of romantic paintings of gallant plate-armored Cormyrean knights hacking at each other or fearsome monsters at dawn or at sunset somewhere in a deep forest that sports crumbling ruins and a chained, shrinking maiden or two. The glasswork is particularly exquisite, though. Fluted blown glass pieces are the order of the day, and they are almost worth the 40-gp-and-up prices!

The proprietress, Amathaea Arryn, can identify most gems and fake gemstones at a glance. She and her two daughters make some of the jewelry and can skillfully retouch paintings to add a customer's face to a knight or blushing maiden figure, a particular charge of arms to a shield, and the like.

# Syndair's Cloth Fancies Weaver and Dressmaker

8 8 8

Some folk come to Eveningstar to learn magic. The village's only known mage besides Lord Tessaril is the kindly Syndair Thorn, who is also a weaver and dressmaker. She uses her minor magics to entertain and to tutor wizards. <sup>19</sup> While she is not averse to short-term tutoring, she takes on no long-term apprentices. She prefers to make her living through her clothworking skills, and is locally renowned for her good eye for custom-

tailoring gowns and her ability to pick colors and shades that exactly compliment the wearer of her designs.

# Taverns/Festhalls The Low Lantern

!!! DOOD

This establishment is a tavern, dance hall, and theater all in one, and it is often noisy and crowded enough that it seems to be a stockyard, too! The Lantern is run by the pretty and spirited Maea "Iron Eyes" Dulgussir, who apparently keeps some discreet magic to defend herself and the Lantern with. The place is popular because it's so cozy and welcoming, from the dark-eyed escorts to the crackling fires by the gaming tables. Traveling minstrels stop here often to provide music for dancers and melancholy midnight drinkers and often leave laden with extra coins thrown their way by appreciative listeners.

The Lantern is thoroughly enjoyable. If this place served any food beyond smoked oysters and overly salty garlic-buttered biscuits, and if it were a little less crowded, it'd be top-rated. It is a pleasant surprise for the traveler in such a small village. Lovers of wine should ask Shareen to show them the cellars. They hold some pleasant surprises, ranging from ruby-and-gold elverquisst to alurlyath from distant Undermountain. I heartily recommend an evening out here.

Rooming Houses
Olff's Rest
Tethyr's court

**!! !!!** 

Eveningstar has two rooming houses:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Syndair is a CG hf M5 and an informant to the Crown.



Tethyr's Court and Olff's Rest. Tethyr's Court is owned by the busy Arbold Tethyr and run by his wife and eight live-in maids. It is cheery and clean but unexciting. Olff's Rest is even less inspiring.

Guests can rent rooms at either house by the tenday or month for 1 sp per night, stabling included. No meals are covered in this fee, and there's no single-night rate. Travelers unable to get into the Tankard or Unicorn have to pay for a tenday even if they only intend to stay one night.

# INNS The Golden Unicorn Inn



This cozy, quiet, back-street place run by Selda Imyara takes the overflow from the more popular Tankard and is often used by nobles who desire discretion. It has separate entrance stairs for some of its suites that open directly to the outside, and it offers its own private stables.

Prices are slightly higher here than at the Tankard, and no provender is to be had beyond melted cheese sandwiches, ale, minted ice water, and house wine. But this is a pleasant enough place, quiet and luxuriously furnished—a hidden gem.

### The Lonesome Tankard



This busy and at times overcrowded inn and tavern also serves as Eveningstar's

restaurant. Inside, it's warm and inviting in a rustic roadhouse sort of way. Most of the villagers gather here to dine every night or to chat over a quaff of ale later in the evening.

The Tankard's fame is increasing steadily as more and more caravan travelers discover it. It's famous as a past base of the Knights of Myth Drannor and the former favorite stopover of the Ring's Men when Azoun was a young prince-adventurer in that band.

The Tankard is run by Dunman Kiriag, a jovial, kind man who's deadly with a hurled dagger but seemingly a friend to everyone. Dunman has betrayed great strength from time to time: Regulars love to tell the tale of how he somehow sensed a brigand was outside with a crossbow. He raised a table to use as a shield just instants before a bolt burst in through a window, then hurled the table clear across the taproom and out that window to fell the foe outside in the night!<sup>20</sup>

The Tankard has two floors of guest bedchambers, a rentable private meeting and/or dining room off the main taproom, and no stables. Dunman rents stalls in the stables due west, across the road for the use of his guests.

The Lonesome Tankard is an enjoyable—and very reasonable—place to stay in pleasant surroundings that is strategically located at the juncture of two major trade roads. As many caravan merchants have found, it's an ideal stop. Caravans can camp due east of the inn, across the river, and use the Starwater freely for bathing and watering their beasts. What could be better?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>For more about Dunman, see Appendix I.



## Immersea.

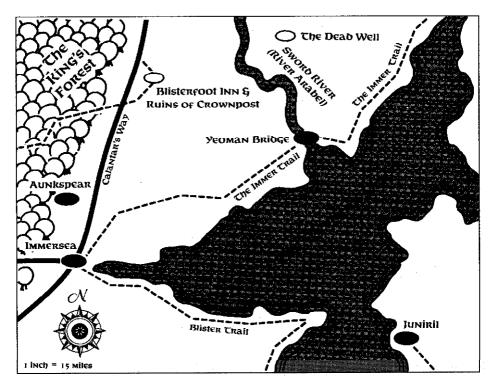
This town of over 600 folk stands at the westernmost tip of the Wyvernwater, at the head of what's generally known as Mist-fisher Bay. The bay had many many names over the years, most of them related to the spectacular sunrises and sunsets visible over the water from the town. Another popular name is Immer Bay because the Immer Stream joins the Wyvernwater here.

Immersea is a waystop on Calantar's Way, where livestock and beasts of burden can be easily watered. The Starwater Road, Immer Trail, and Blister Trail all link up with that paved way here. Immersea is also a fishing village. The local fleet of "mist fishers" fares forth onto the Wyvernwater daily

to catch freshwater eels, silverfin, trout, crabs, greenbacks, and other fish from the rich waters of Cormyr's largest lake.

Immersea is one of the few places in Cormyr whose citizens seem openly unhappy with their government. They are not unhappy with King Azoun but with his do-nothing, lazy overly cautious local lord, Samtavan Sudacar. Samtavan is a Suzailan investor and landlord of large holdings who spends his days fishing and reading old books in Redstone Castle, where he's been given his own apartments. His work is done by his herald, Geldroon, one of the most weary men I've yet seen.

Samtavan's inattention has made Immersea a somewhat free and easy trade town in recent years. Weapons are worn openly by some, Purple Dragons are rarely





seen in uniform—though they patrol diligently in plain dress—and local noble families finance and provide manpower for much of the work of street-cleaning and keeping order.

Immersea is the ancestral seat of the Wyvernspur noble family the Cormaeril clan, and the Thunderswords. The visitor is advised to respect anyone who looks arrogant, is richly dressed, or is clad in livery. Such people are probably associated with one of these three powerful old families and aren't to be crossed.

### Landmarks

Immersea is shaped like a fan.<sup>21</sup> It fills the Immer Stream valley as the valley runs due east and opens out to meet the Wyvernwater. Farms surround the town; sheep, cattle, barley and corn are major local products. The most built-up area of the town centers on the waterfront and the arrow-straight Starwater Road running to meet it.

An impressive stone statue of King Azoun III, armored and with sword drawn in the saddle of a rearing charger whose hooves are trampling a mound of dead brigands and foes, stands in a wagon turning yard behind the docks where the major roads meet. The sculpting of Azoun Triumphant is fine, but the eminence is much beset by incontinent local fowl. Azoun's statue is one of the favorite meeting spots in Immersea and is easily found by newcomers.

The other good local meeting place is Gaesthund's Tomb, located at the meeting of the Starwater Road and Immer Street. Gaesthund was a local giant of a man who once lifted an excessively proud king of Cormyr up in the air and shook him. This caused a stir among the knights at hand because the king was on horseback. Gaesthund didn't bother to separate the king from his saddle and hoisted both horse and full-armored man into the air with a grow!!

The resting place of this huge man is marked by a massive boulder that has been much scraped and scarred by the uneasy passage of poorly driven wagons. The boulder bears this charming inscription:

IMMERSEA EARTH LIE HEAVY ON GAESTHUND, FOR HE IN LIFE LAID A PASSING HEAVY LOAD ON THEE.

Immersea is an important stopover and boasts many rooming houses and provisioning shops. The most popular of its inns are the pricey Immer Inn and the more casual, but better, Five Fine Fish. The Five Fine Fish is the home of Elminster's Choice, a dark, bitter, smoky beer brewed there almost daily.<sup>22</sup> Its reek often fills the place and can guide even a hopelessly lost traveler to the inn door.

The most prominent local building is Redstone Castle, the lofty castle of the Wyvernspurs. It is a fortified sandstone manor house perched on a high hill just south of town. It frowns down over Immersea from among its wooded lawns, its geographic prominence making it seem far grander than the larger,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>A map of Immersea can be found in the revised edition of the Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting box in the chapter on Cormyr or in the Cormyr game accessory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Elminster: I've forgiven the impudent wretch who was so bold as to borrow my good name for his second-rate ale. Eighty years as a stone toadstool is enough, I think. He sees things my way now and even lends a hand with things better not spoken of, but don't make the mistake of believing I prefer this stuff. Never serve it to me unless (a foolish tactic, to be sure) you mean to insult me.



taller, many-towered pile of High Towers, the Cormaeril family home, which stands on a lower hill due east of it.

The seat of the third noble family Thundersword House, is southwest of the Wyvernspur lands and hence remote from the town proper. It is newer and larger than either of the other castles but dominates only its own small valley surmounting a small knoll at the heart of the wooded basin.

Interestingly the sons of both the Cormaerils and the Thunderswords all closely resemble King Azoun. All of them have also been quietly approached in their youths by veteran Purple Dragon officers who made them handsome offers of career sponsorship in the army ranks! Save for a few who tried adventuring careers, all of the lads accepted. Most remain in service to this day, posted all around the edges of the realm. More than one local citizen has remarked how curious it is that so many lads look just like the king and yet never see anything of the realm closer to Suzail than Immersea itself! I leave readers to their own conclusions on this delicate matter of state and continue my survey of Immersea's sights.23

Prosperous farms and close-crowded townhouses are the order of things in Immersea. Growing things are valued—flowering vines are everywhere—and the mists keep everything lush. The wooded height of Spring Hill, where the Immer Stream rises, is just west of Redstone Castle. It is adorned with both a beautiful series of cascades, known as Selûne's Stairs, and the House of the Lady, a temple to Selûne.

West of that height is the wooded eminence of Graveyard Hill, topped by the

Wyvernspur Crypt. The hill holds a complex network of catacombs. Brazen adventurers and thieves took to trying to loot the tombs so often that guardian spells and magical devices were installed. Visitors are advised to look upon the crypt gates from afar unless accompanied by a family member.

# Places of Interest in Immersea

### Palaces

### Redstone Castle

This small, diamond-shaped fortress consists of a gate house, two outlying end towers, and the main manor house. The gatehouse contains stables, a carriage shed, a barracks used to house the watch contingent under the command of Lord Samtavan (and a private army in the younger days of the realm), dungeon cells, an armory, and granaries.

The seat of the Wyvernspurs is a twostory house with a full basement below that is given over to servants' quarters. The house is surmounted by a tower with another four floors. It contains a manypillared reception hall big enough to hold the entire population of Immersea and still allow one to hold archery contests!

To see this grand house, one has only to arrive and ask for an audience with the lord. While waiting for the servants to find or awaken the lord, the visitor can admire Samtavan's collection of fishing rods.

# Temples The House of the Lady

This open-air temple is a clearing in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Elminster: Azoun has always been concerned about making proper opportunities available to other noble relatives in his family tree—if ye know what I mean. He remembers with fondness the fruitful and carefree days of his adventure-filled youth and feels that other noble youths should be given the chance for such glorious martial pastimes.



duskwoods and shadowtops that is ringed by an unbroken, circular stone seat graven with many prayers to the goddess. At the center of this ring stands a stepped pyramid whose every stone is carved with a prayer. The pyramid is topped by a large statue of Selûne. The statue depicts the goddess as two backto-back women: a dusky-skinned, white-tressed maiden and a matronly middle-aged woman.

The temple is tended by a priestess of Selûne, a middle-aged, kindly woman named Mother Lledew. She's a skilled stonecarver; the temple is her creation. She dwells in a cell-like stone-lined room under one edge of the ring. Her room opens out onto the hillside below, and there's a stark stone room beside hers for visitors. The guest room is fitted with its own hearth and chimney. Mother Lledew keeps firewood ready near the guest chamber's chimney and a spring seeping through one wall provides visitors with drinking water.

## Shops

Immersea's shops hold a bustling array of weavers, netmakers, cordwainers, coopers, cratemakers, and hardware resellers who cater to every possible need of the traveling merchant. All of their shops are useful, unlovely places littered with broken crates, handcarts, and broken crockery. Everyone always seems to be too busy to tidy anything away, though there's a fence of trash along the north edge of the High Common, the grazing fields on the northern edge of town that are left for the use of visitors. Exceptional among local establishments are the following:

### Alzael's Cleaver Slaughterhouse

8 8

This local slaughterhouse ends the life of many a cow and ewe. Alzael wields an expert cleaver and has both shearers and smokers on staff. He can convert an animal to bailed wool and smoked meat for a customer or buy the beast outright and send the results on to other local businesses. When King Azoun whelmed an army to fight the Tuigan Horde, Alzael slaughtered 600 cows in one day and over 400 on the next to get the meat hung in time for army quartermasters to pick it up and take it with the armed host. That feat earned Alzael the local title of "Thousandslaver" and made his name known in Sembia as well as all across Cormyr.

Alzael's trade has flourished since then. He's bought an entire pig farm, and folk now travel to Immersea just to get a wagonload of his aged, smoked hams cured in cherry brandy. A wagonload is enough to last a year and have some to sell to one's neighbors.

Alzael, a beaming giant of a man with a nose that has been broken many times, loves his new-found wealth and dreams of being ennobled by a respectful king someday soon. Women who think their daughters would make the perfect mate for such a successful man have rapidly become numerous, and Alzael is quite willing to consider the merits of each prospective mate. None of the candidates who have shown up yet swing a cleaver to his liking, though, so if you're a comely wench with a good sharp blade, a keen eye, and a strong arm . . .



### Chalasse's Fine Clothing

Clothing Shop



The lovely Chalasse is a graceful, soft-spoken woman almost 7 feet tall! Her height has made her a shy outcast, but in truth she's so beautiful that I've seen young nobles literally lose their breath at the sight of her. She grew up in Suzail and always loves to hear news of what's happening there.

She runs a shop full of fine gowns, sashes, cummerbunds, pantaloons, half-cloaks, gem-bedecked hose, ruffs, slashed-sleeve tunics, and similar garb for the richest and haughtiest folk. She tries to bring in the latest fashions from Sembia and Suzail as swiftly as her buyers can send them, and locals and passing nobles alike are beginning to notice the selection she offers. After years of scraping by, this huge woman looks to be on the road to riches at last.

Chalasse has also begun to deal in secondhand finery because so many Immer women just can't afford her wares. Some Suzailans bring in their wives' discards to sell off for a quick handful of coins as they travel through the town, and Chalasse always persuades them to pause a moment to give her news of her childhood home.

Chalasse's purses have been filled for her over the years by two adventuring bands who looked upon her shop as a good investment. She can call on their aid by some secret magical means if robbed or attacked. They come to help her with all due speed because they've hidden substantial sums of coinage in and around Immersea, and she knows where some of it is. Thieves be warned!

### **Nelzol's Notions**

Hardware and Modes of Transport



This sprawling barn (well, former ware-house actually) of a hardware shop deserves mention here because it boasts a huge selection of goods: wagons, closed coaches, sleighs, and even boats stand ready in various corners of the shop. The visitor with coins enough can literally buy a ship to sail across the Wyvernwater to build a house and fill the ship with every last thing needed to do the building!

From kettles to ladders, rope to coils of fine wire, kegs of nails to kegs of pitch paint, this is the place that has everything in stock. Want a siege ladder? Several can be found here; name your preferred length. Would you like to arrive in Suzail in a grand coach? Name your preferred color, seating capacity and number of horses to draw it. Would you like a barn erected overnight? A ready-to-be-assembled structure awaits you on its own cart with roof trusses and wall panels preassembled. Simply drive in the support posts, link them with the precut beams, raise the structure, and apply the shingles. With a crew of four or more, it can be done in a day!

Nelzol's isn't cheap, but it really does seem to have everything needed for building things or going places. It's a must-see shop.

# Taverns The Horn and Spur



This is a welcoming, easygoing sort of family drinking house, well lit and clean, with a quiet atmosphere and discreet booths at



the back for those who wish to meet for romantic purposes or to talk business. The horn from the tavern's name is a giant rack of peryton antlers over the bar, and the spur was a famous local stallion whose stuffed head now stares down impassively at diners with eternal calm.

This is a great tavern in which to relax and watch visitors and nobles drop in. Some of the Cormaerils and Thunderswords, I'm told, come here regularly in their finery to dine and drink. They then go down to the Runner to get drunk and enjoy a good tussle with their own farmhands.

### The Mist Runner





This sparsely furnished, well-worn dockside establishment is where the fisherfolk come to drink and engage in fisticuffs. The windows no longer have any glass, just shutters, and the tables are nailed securely to the floor to prevent them from being hurled—well, most of the time.

Named for the local term for a smuggling ship, <sup>24</sup> this tavern is only safe for those who can defend themselves and know how to avoid having to do so. Others—finely clad visitors in particular—are directed to the Horn and Spur instead.

# Rooming Houses The House of Nets Maela's Rooming House Nulahh's Rooming House





Besides its inns, Immersea also has many rooming houses, most offering rates for a three-night stay, a tenday, a two-month "stretch," or a four-month "long stretch." They're very much alike and have nothing to either recommend them or cause me to warn visitors away from them. All are large converted houses. The best-known, perhaps, are Maela's, Nulahh's, and the House of Nets.

# INNS Five Fine Fish



No longer a true tavern, this wayhouse now serves only its own beer, and that only with meals. The dining room has taken over the former taproom, and rowdy drinkers are encouraged to go elsewhere.

This change of services has made the low-priced Fish the stopover of choice for families, the timid, and those carrying valuable and breakable goods. Its trade has soared, prompting two expansions of the inn in the last three years. Gables have been added fore and after, a new wing has been built, and the stables have been doubled in size.

The Fish is vastly improved over its state when I first knew it, two decades ago. Fxpensive but permanent breeze-making spells have driven both chimney smoke and the smell of hops out of the inn to drift through the rest of town. The Fish's beer is an acquired taste, but the food is steadily improving. The inn sports a menu lacking in surprises and devoted mainly to fried fish in various sauces and roasts in gravy with potatoes and greens. Nevertheless, with the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Such smuggling ships have not seen use since the long-ago days when the lands to the east were separate kingdoms. Then, a ship on the Wyvernwater could make a hefty profit evading taxes with runs of spirits one way and pelts in the other.



ongoing improvements in atmosphere, fare, and service, I recommend the place.

### Halaband's Inn

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Halaband's is the least-known of Immersea's inns. It's a dark, drafty old place of gray-haired servants and fine old wood paneling. Its dining room offers a wider selection of food than the Fish. This is a good thing, because the place is otherwise a sad second to its better-known competitor. Everything's broken and mended or very well-used, and if you dress warmly or go in the hot days of summer, you can appreciate the comfortable feel of the place.

Halaband's offers suites suitable for large groups of travelers. The inn's founder, long dead, was an adventurer, and he built this place as a base. One interesting feature of the inn is the array of halfling-sized laundry chutes that slope from each floor to the basements. There's also a dumbwaiter that takes hot food from the kitchens to each floor. Bells are rung to herald the arrival of the



viands—and to drive off the bats that like to ride on the dumbwaiter itself.

The staff can recommend local escorts and other locals who provide in-room service performing massages, tending to one's pedicure or manicure, or dressing one's hair. Halaband's provides adequate accommodation, but could be improved.

### The Immer Inn



The most snobbish and overpriced of Immersea's inns, the Immer Inn is a place that has to be seen to be believed. It's a former manor house that's been 'improved' with gilded columns everywhere and hanging brass pots bristling with ferns. Carved ki-rin wind charms and little plaster trumpet-bearing sprites have been worked into every corner. In short, the place tries to look like a palace.

The Immer's wine cellar is superb, the ales less so, and the kitchens here specialize in inventive things done to fish (trout stuffed with cheese? Why?) and in various seasoned sorts of cheese. Guests each have a personal server who waits on them for three meals daily if they wish to partake of food, and there's a pair of chambermaids on each floor that one can ring for if any need arises.

There are no single rooms at the Immer Inn. All suites have a bath chamber and receiving room linked to a wardrobe off of which opens either one or two bedrooms. Each receiving room has its own fireplace and window. The rooms are very nice and utterly soundproof. With the doors closed, you never know you aren't alone in a private residence. All this luxury, however, easily costs upward of 30 gp per night. Ouch.



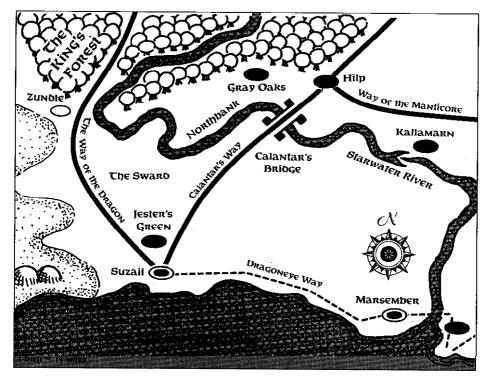
## Jester's Green

This village of about 600 merchants stands just north of Suzail. It's named for an inn that once stood at its center and burned down long ago, killing the innkeeper. The innkeeper was known as the Jester; he was a rogue wizard who defrauded one too many guests with his magic and was destroyed by a *meteor swarm* hurled by a Red Wizard of Thay traveling in disguise.

The Green, a huge caravan campfield serviced by the inn, survives. It has become the traditional mustering camp of the militia and the marshaling ground for any army called up by Cormyr. It's bordered by permanent Purple Dragon barracks. Among the barracks, an open-

air market has been permanently set up for the convenience of the troops. Once a tenday, a horse auction is held on the Green. Breeders bring their stock here so that citizens of Suzail, country folk who can get to the Green without enduring the crowding and prices of Suzail, and the soldiery can all bid on the horses, guaranteeing good prices.

If you've got something to sell that warriors would want to buy, this is the place to come. The deceitful are warned that the troops dispense their own rough justice to those who cheat them. A Zhentarim agent once tried to decimate the defenders of Cormyr by selling poisoned wine here, and a war wizard inspector discovered this before anyone even fell ill by using poison detection magic. The





unfortunate Zhent was literally torn apart by furious soldiers! (The inspector was part of a regular duty detail; poisoners and wine vendors are hereby warned.)

## Places of Interest in Jester's Green

Gambling Houses
The Lucky Dragon

This dimly lit establishment rents out chairs at its gaming tables for 1 gp per hour; the time is governed by an intricate water clock that chimes at the top of the hour. Drinks of bad ale and worse wine served in generous clay cups are 4 cp per fill. Bets and the company of a few local lasses who cruise the place seeking to comfort and escort weary gamblers are, of course, extra.

Purple Dragons play at half price in the Lucky Dragon. Some of the more popular games played in this house and elsewhere in Cormyr, especially where Purple Dragons are stationed, are described in the pages hereafter, in a short essay of mine on games.

### Shops

The stalls in the market change rapidly, but Jester's Green does have a few shops of interest:

The Flame of Love Lutery
Lutes and Romantic Trinkets

Yes, this crammed shop does offer lutes, but it also sells love poems for smitten soldiers to send or declaim to their light-o'-loves as well as scented candles, lingerie, magically preserved flowers, keepsake gifts, "from a secret admirer" notes, bottles of wine, racy broadsheets, and er, indiscreet romantic pictures. The Maiden Said Maybe, High Ladies in Love, and The Elf Maiden and the Unicorn are a few of the broadsheets for sale. These masterpieces go for 1 sp each. The romantic pictures are priced from 1 sp to 10 gp; most are 6 sp.

# The Old Codpiece Arms & Armory Armory

Named for the fearsome protuberance on a fat old suit of armor reputed to have once belonged to Dhalmass the Warrior King, but more likely once the property of the "Old Boar," his stoutest baron, this shop is crammed with arms and armor. Over a dozen complete suits of armor stand among the goods, and thieves are warned that both magically animated flying daggers and battle horrors capable of flight guard the place against thieves.

Secondhand arms and armor are what this shop deals in. The proprietors buy at half price (or less if the condition of the goods is terrible) and sell at two-thirds to three-quarters the going new price. For instance, a short sword is typically 6 or 7 gp. Note that the three old dwarves and six retired Purple Dragons who run the place are expert at hurling weapons at any spot in the shop.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Consider them +3 to hit when throwing any weapon in the shop. All serve as eyes and ears of the war wizards; loose talk among patrons is reported to the authorities.

### Games of Chance

Many similar games of chance and shady skill are played across Faerun. Knowing subtle differences of etiquette and play from place to place is an essential survival skill for travelers. Here are three gambling games played in Cormyr alongside chess and more familiar card and dice games.

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### Toss the Dagger

Played in cruder ways elsewhere, This game gets the full treatment at the Lucky Dragon: Two daggers are Thrown upward simultaneously by a blindfolded maiden, who then steps back. She hurls them up into a hanging forest of old scraps of armor, fragments of blades, and the like that dangles from the ceiling on cords and chains. Both daggers must strike something on their upward trip or both must be thrown again. The floor of the Throwing area is made of damp sand.

Players bet on whether one, both, or none of the daggers will strike point downward when they reach the ground. Bets are placed before the daggers are thrown and continue until only one player can afford to continue or (by prior agreement) for str, seven, nine, or twelve bets.

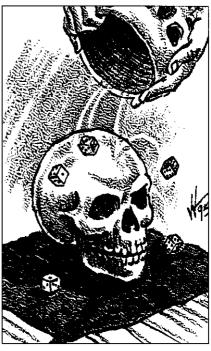
### Traitor's Heads

Five dice are shaken inside a skull and then dropped out of it onto a second skull that has been placed on a large dark cloak or velvet cloth. To count, a die must strike the second skull and come to rest on the cloth.

Dice that miss the skull or roll off the cloth must be shaken and dropped again.

Casting the dice alternately, players seek to reach an exact total.

Doubles, Triples, and quartets can be taken at face value or rerolled at the caster's choice. One die or both may be rerolled in the case of duplicates, but if



The player chooses to reroll a triple or quartet, all of the matching dice must be rolled. Any casting where all five dice land displaying the same number wins the game instantly.

Bets are placed per game and sometimes modified by the number of rolls required to achieve the target total. Players who go over the needed total (usually 36) get a free roll of all five dice and drop from their over-total the number of points the dice show. Thereafter, they take their turn casting a single die only. When they approach the needed total, all rolls that take them over the total again are ignored, and they must continue to roll in their turn until the exact total is met.

### Swords and Shields

This card game is played with two identical decks that may be of any sort, so long as they have at least 20 cards. One player chooses a single card from his or her hand and puts it face down

on the Table. The other player puts an array (called a Tableau) of 20 cards face down on the Table with a coin atop each one. One of these cards must be the second player's king or dragon or crown card, depending on what deck is used. (The sole top-value card of the deck.)

The player who is dealt one card (a "shield") Tries to find the king by Turning over cards. Each card Turned over That isn't the king costs him or her a coin to match the one atop the card, except the card that matches the shield card, which must then be immediately shown to the player who laid down the 20-card Tableau. The match between The overturned card and the Turning player's shield card must be exact in suit and type. If so, the turning player pays nothing for flipping the card over; instead, the player who laid out the Tableau pays The Turning player double The value of The coin on The flipped card. If the king is discovered before only four cards are left, The player who

dealt the tableau must pay the Turning player double the value of the most valuable coin on any card on the table.

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This simple gambling game is sometimes enlivened in two ways: "calling the hounds" and "Telling." Calling the hounds is the practice of allowing the Turning player to call out any two cards except the king by name, including suit and type, after all coins and cards are laid out in the tableau but before any card has been turned over. If these cards are in the Tableau, the player who laid out the Tableau must turn them over at this time. Neither player pays anything at this time, but the turning player's odds are bettered.

In Telling, a favorite practice in Cormyr, the Turning player must Tell a joke, incident, or Tale leading up to each card Turnover. An example follows:

'Tis said that the hero Ambrangarr of Tsurlagol once found a mirror in a wizard's Tower, boldly stepped through it, and found himself in The Lair of a dragon. The dragon asked him a riddle: "Fits in my mouth but fills a cavern. What is it?" Ambrangarr, being a hero, and Therefore not overly quick or keen of wit, knew not the answer ("smoke"), so The dragon Tried To slay him. Ambrangarr swept up a chest from the dragon's heaped, glittering treasure hoard, and jammed it into the dragon's jaws. Then he slew it by plunging his sword deep into both its eyes. The dragon died, crushing The chest as its jaws convulsed, and out of the shattered chest fell-a card.

At this point the Turning player chooses a card and Turns IT over with a flourish.



# Knightswood

This tranquil wooded hamlet grew around several knights' steadings (hence its name), but doesn't seem to have developed all that much. Today, Knightswood consists of an arched wooden bridge over the Starwater; a sawmill beside it; a woodcarver's shop where strongchests, stools, and chairs are made and sold; the cottages of foresters; and the Old Owlbear, a good (if rustic) inn.

Local woodcarvers are licensed to cut a limited number of trees from the forest in specific clearings around Knightswood. A local circle of druids dedicated to Silvanus, the Knightswood Nine, ensures that no unlawful felling occurs. The circle's ongoing efforts have made the forest around Knightswood rich in exotic plants, bustling with woodland creatures, and beautiful to the eye. They're rumored to dwell in an underground home reached by climbing down into a huge hollow tree and to cultivate mushrooms in a vast series of caverns linked to their abode. These caverns are eerily lit by glowing fungi that grow among the 'shrooms and afford the druids several back door exits to the surface. The exits emerge in the woods all around the village.

The Nine can be contacted by speaking to Aunglar the miller or his assistant Jaerith. The Nine are all old men. They are led by Draguth Endroun, a whitemaned, opinionated man who likes to cultivate an air of mystery and is known to wield a staff of the woodlands.

Knightswood was home to the master bard Chanthalas, composer of the famous song "The Cormyte's Boast" that is roared out in many a taproom and fireside when tankards have been emptied several times. I've included its lyrics on a succeeding page for travelers who don't want to be left out when everyone else is bawling out the words more or less in time—though seldom more or less in tune.

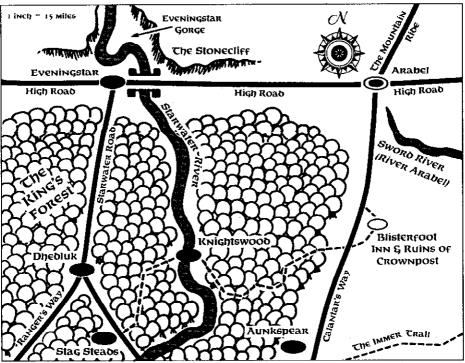
The tumble-down cottage of the master bard largely owes its present decrepit state to the efforts of many searchers who have tried to find his *harp of charming* in the 50-odd winters since he died. If anyone has found it, she or he has spirited it away and escaped detection.

Knightswood was also home to the wizard Cauldigurn the Black, a mild-mannered war wizard known for the battle spells he devised, all of which combined harmful effects with an area of conjured darkness and were the origin of his nickname. Cauldigurn died in Sembia 22 winters ago, and his small cottage stands roofless and empty. Somewhere around it, locals insist, is an invisible gate to his real home, where his spellbooks, magical items, and wealth presumably still lie. Several war wizards have thoroughly searched the cottage and the woods around, but no trace of a magical way to elsewhere-or any magic at all-has yet been found.

The most famous current resident of Knightswood is Baerelus the Bold, an aging satyr who's an expert on the history and habits of beings of the King's Forest and a confidant of many young folk. For 60 years he's been giving wise advice for free to young lovers, runaways, and Cormytes whose problems trouble them deeply.

Baerelus can usually be found near the Old Oak, a huge, gnarled old tree that stands alone in the first clearing north of the mill. He's rumored to have magical means of protecting himself against those who offer him harm or try to kidnap him. At the Old Owlbear, they often tell of the time he was





drugged with doctored wine, caged, and smuggled to Sembia by merchants planning to sell him to a college of learning in Selgaunt. The second night of the journey found the captors camped near the Hullack Forest. They fled for their lives when they went to feed Baerelus and found no sign of the old satyr. The cage was open and an angry gargoyle was waiting for them in it.

## Places of Interest in Knightswood

Shops

Aunglar's Mill

Sawmill

8 8

This cluttered old shed has a placid, duck-

haunted pond and three small wheels in its millrace rather than the more usual single large one. Here Aunglar, his assistant Jaerith, and a half-dozen less skilled helpers cut timber into blocks, boards, beams, and spars. They're not very skilled woodcutters, but they don't charge much either.

# INNS The Old Owlbear

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The Owlbear is old, rustic, and comfortable. It is a relaxed place run by graybeards with a tranquility to match their pace. Beware their parsnip wine, as it is far stronger than it seems. This inn sports nothing spectacular and is simply a solid, honest place ideal for rest and recuperation.



### The Cormyte's Boast

When Purple Dragons first rode the ways, Swording every monster seen, Then did adventurers' mighty plays Hearten all in this land green. But now with farmer and merchant both I hearken more or lasting peace, And find myself increasing loath To welcome the weapons charter wreath.

#### Chorus

And in this land I'll proudly stand Until my dying day, sir. For whate'er king o'er all command I'll still be a Cormyte brave, sir.

Now Sembian gold it piles up high, And men show the price of their hides. But there stand here folk you cannot buy Whate'er changing fortune's tides. So let all dandies prance and preen, Doing anything for coins tossed their way. Here in this pleasant kingdom green I'll steadfast unbending stay. Chorus

Now other lands sing prouder songs, And their folk come swaggering our way. But if those lands are so free of wrongs, Why do their folk from home away? Oh, many boasts are empty boasts, And distant shores our hearts recall, But among all other glittering toasts There's one that beats 'em all Chorus

And in Cormyr none shall starve or thirst For so the fair law demands. But of all fair folk we are the first To strike down bad laws and commands. Some folk may live in layer halls Or wear cut gems on every toe. Such folk take greater and grander falls And so find harder rows to hoe. Chorus

(Repeat the chorus if the company demands. Usually the last chorus is sung once and then again a second time at half speed and twice the proud, emphatic volume!)





## Mouth o' Gargoyles

This village of 460-odd folk stands on the Starwater Road between Dhedluk and Immersea, where the road fords the Starwater River. Its name comes from a mage of long ago who dwelt in a cave here and used a flight of gargoyles to drive folk away and mount night raids on both cargoes passing on the river and encamped travelers. These fearsome flying monsters terrorized the region for years until mages could be hired in numbers enough to destroy them and confront their master. The resulting battle blew apart the cave, which had been known as the Mouth of the Gargoyles, and only its name remains today.

The battle also left a more lasting legacy: a wild magic curse that makes the whole village an unreliable locale for spellcasting. Spells almost always go awry here, and magical item effects go wild most times they are invoked. Signs are posted to prevent magic use by the unwary. They clearly state that it is against Crown law to try to cast or unleash magic within the area bounded by the signs, which is the entire village. War wizards and Crown officers are exempted from this law, but they have their own rules against breaking it.

The mere presence of magical items doesn't awaken the curse, but any visitor who tries to activate even the most minor magic creates an immediate spellstorm of wild magic effects that spirals off in all directions. For example, trees turn blue, shrubs begin to levitate and drift about, leaves turn to glass and metal shards and fly about in all directions, stone turns to

water, earth is hurled up into wavelike immobile shapes, and birds explode into fireballs here and there.<sup>26</sup>

The damage that such wild magic storms can do is considerable, and folk can easily be slain. Miscreants who willfully cause such effects are typically imprisoned for a tenday and lose all carried goods as a forfeit. If such storms are caused by adventurers, they have their charter revoked or suspended for a month or more. Those who accidentally cause wild magic surge spellstorms and can *prove* that their act wasn't willful (not an easy thing to do) receive lighter sentences.

Mouth o' Gargoyles today is a village of woodcarvers, furnituremakers, and makers and sellers of oils. The oil producers are known as lighters. They glean flammable oils and less viscous amberglow<sup>27</sup> by probing deep into rock fissures near the site of the now-destroyed wizard's cave, where natural oils well up. They pump up the oil they locate, allow it to settle, and then filter it. From time to time, a spontaneous ball of fire or jet of flame bursts up from beneath the earth, hurling an unfortunate lighter or two into the air, and the air around the rocks has a heavy reek that makes most folk ill.

Over the years, many folk have mysteriously disappeared around the village. Some locals believe the vanished folk have been swallowed up by magical *gates* opened up by the wild magic. Others credit a mad mage who uses gates to kidnap folk. Still others blame the disappearances on drow raiders stealing up from beneath the earth. The true cause of the disappearances is still unknown.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>The FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures and Tome of Magic sourcebooks contain additional wild magic effects.
<sup>27</sup>Amberglow is used as a lubricant and to keep blades from rusting.





## Places of Interest in Mouth o' Gargoyles

Shops
Bendagar's Barrels

Cooper

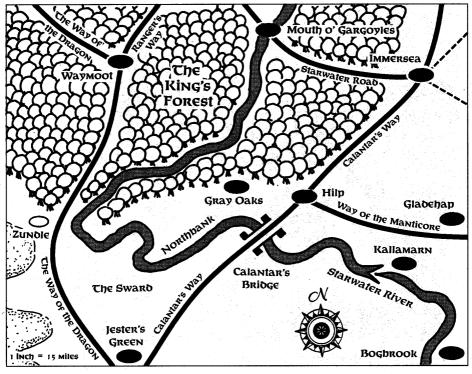
The hearty, beer-swilling owner of this shop looks rather like a barrel himself. In this cavernous former barn he makes and sells barrels of all sizes, from tiny herb kegs that fit in your palm—made for wearing around a lady's neck to provide scent in odoriferous surroundings—to tuns that one can fit an intact horse or monster carcass into. Those very small kegs cost 1 gp each, and the largest cost 65 gp. The standard sizes vary slightly in price according to what woods they're made of, how they're sealed, if they have an inner liner or not, and how many

bands hold them together, but they average as follows: A hand keg costs 2 sp and a cask 3 sp. A barrel of the size most folk are used to runs 4 sp for a simple sample and 1 gp for a heavy-duty banded one. A butt costs 12 gp for a plain sample and 20 gp for heavy-duty workmanship.

At these low prices, merchants can afford to buy in bulk, and they do. The shop is usually a steam-filled madhouse of workers bending wood, clamping bands, and rushing hoops or semifinished barrels here and there. It's not unusual for Bendagar and his staff to turn out 80 barrels or more in a day.

Bendagar's never without a pipe and tankard near him, and he likes to gossip about Cormyr's politics and nobles. Bring him some good ale and you're likely to hear some frank observations about the high and mighty of Cormyr that would shock some ears greatly!





Thaelin's Finework

Small Boxes and Finework Coffers

§ § §

The quiet, careful Thaelin Althor is a retired warrior from Chessenta. He stands fully 7 feet tall. Two crossed two-handed swords hang near at hand on his shop wall. Locals tell me he used those swords to fell 17 orcs the last time a raiding band burst out of the forest and fell on the village. Apparently the goblinkin know about the wild magic conditions in Mouth O' Gargoyles, and once or twice a year they take advantage of the forest cover and the fact that they're unlikely to be met by defending magic.

Thaelin makes and sells a wide variety of small, delicate, ornamentally carved boxes. Most of them are hand-sized boxes or

slightly larger coffers. They cost 6 to 200 gp, and they come with latches and rings for locks to be fitted to them. They are ideal for storing papers, coins, and the like. Exquisite!

# Tavern/Inn/FesThall The Gargoyle's Perch



Run by a dozen friends who hire out as escorts to interested guests, this old, sprawling, and ramshackle roadhouse has a poor wine cellar, a good selection of ales and stouts, and a rather poor dining room of the "we keep it dim so you can't see what you're eating—and for good reason" sort. Its sleeping facilities are a series of similarly dim, seldom-cleaned bed-chambers. I was not impressed.



# Stag Steads

Once a druid's home, this isolated locale has been an ogre's den, a brigand's stronghold, and finally a hunting lodge forfeited to the Crown when the last Goldfeather noble was executed for treason by King Dhalmass in 1191 DR. Ever since, it's been used by the royal family, the three royal noble clans (the Crownsilvers, Huntsilvers, and Truesilvers), and by others (by invitation only).

Some 70 years ago, lesser nobles fought for a chance to risk their necks hunting stags and boar through the trees with spears. A rare few had the pleasure of doing so from the enchanted *flying saddle of Thamos* before that useful item disappeared—stolen, 'tis said, by an impoverished noble hired by a Sembian mage, who hoped to make many of the things but failed. Now all the fashion conscious have already gone hunting. The rush of haughty folk has slowed to a trickle, though a hunting tour is still a coming-of-age ritual of sorts for young male nobles.

### The Place

This luxurious hunting lodge has been dug into hillsides, planted over with mosses, and bulwarked with saplings that have since grown into respectable trees until today it seems to grow out of the forest like a turtle half-hidden in a puddle. It's hard to see the place until you're almost at its doors. Inside, it's cool, dim, and damp except in the circular dining room where a gigantic hearth suitable for roasting three

whole deer or boars at once warms the chamber. If one's not given to bone-ache from the damp, the Stead can be a secure den in the depths of one of the most beautiful forests humans can easily reach.

## The Prospect

Attendance at the Stead today is still by invitation only, but since Vangerdahast began holding war wizard conferences here, and Alusair Nacacia and the wilder young Huntsilver nobles started to use the place as a retreat for trysts, many an untitled guest has hunted out of the Stead for a few days. It's unusual to stay more than six or seven nights or a tenday at the outside. Nobles who try to take up residence here for longer are politely asked to leave-if necessary, by the Royal Magician himself, summoned for the purpose by message stone. (A teleport gate that links the place with the Palace of the Purple Dragon in Suzail is hidden somewhere in the dark back rooms of the Stead. It whisks royals, war wizards, their retainers, and flat stones with message parchments wrapped around them back and forth whenever necessary.)

Despite the lodge's continuous use for over two centuries, hunting in the area is still good. Local rumor has it that war wizards magically restock the King's Forest in the vicinity. Bards—especially elves and half-elves—like to stop at the Stead because of its verdant surroundings. However, if royals or senior war wizards are in residence, bards arriving unannounced can expect to undergo a magically assisted interrogation by a war wizard, to find out just who they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Elminster says this is true. A cavern south of the Stead is home to one of two deepspawn whose captivity is known to be sanctioned by Vangerdahast. The other is in a secret cellar of the Palace. Both have been fed on an exclusive diet of boar, stag, grouse, and pheasant.



are and what unadvertised powers they may wield, before they're allowed to stay.

## The Provender

Fare at the Stead is fern-and-fiddlehead soup, morels, and other forest vegetables flanking roast boar, venison, and grouse. Though the menu seldom varies, the wine cellar is excellent, the cook is a master of sauces designed to add a little variety to the meat, and—best of all — everything's free. That is, it's free to a guest.

Bards aren't paid for their entertainment, but they also stay for free. Travelers not allowed in can camp at a forest clearing not far from the Stead and buy meals from a serving window on one side of the Stead for a single night only. Purple Dragon hunters assisted by war wizards who dress like their fellow foresters firmly move all squatters on. Travelers who think to camp and sneak to the Stead later to eavesdrop are warned that concealed war wizards (perhaps magically using the eyes of local animals) keep watch over encamped folk to prevent just such unauthorized visits.

### The Places

Travelers buying their meals through the window can expect to pay 1 gp per platter. A platter, a simple oval of metal with a raised edge to hold in sauce, holds a generous serving for a single hungry person. Wine is 4 gp per bottle, and ale—not the best—can be had for 2 gp for a hand keg. The platter, which is stamped with a full-face, heavily antlered stag's head, is yours

to keep. There's a brisk trade in these souvenirs among socially climbing Cormyreans. Drinks are served in their containers, with nondescript clay cups provided on request.

### Travelers' Lore

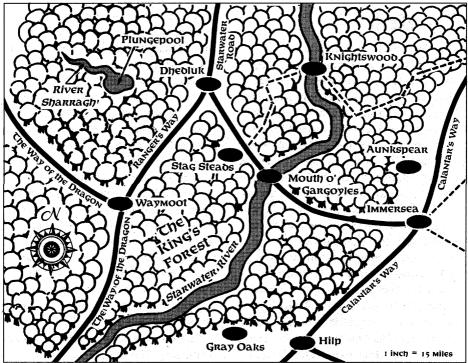
Guests at the Stead can wander the woods by themselves, but unless they're frequent visitors or of one of the royal houses, they're strongly encouraged by the staff to hire one of the local hunters as guides. The strongest encouragements come from Bald Jhawn, the head huntsman, a massively muscled master wrestler with a plentiful fund of tall tales about hunting mishaps and "weirds of the woods."

The best of the badged foresters<sup>29</sup> is generally acknowledged to be one Tlumbel Droun, a half-elf of pranksome ways. Calmer and more easily located for hire are Bald Jhawn himself and several taciturn individuals who go by the names of Ithaglor Bruensal, Dreth Milyntyr, and Doalogh Dultor. Their fees vary from 1 to 6 gp per day, depending on who one hires and what game the hunter is told to seek.

All of these guides are expert hunters, trappers, and skinners, and all of them know the local trails, including the way to such landmarks as Oadal's Stand and the Mushroom Dell. Oadal's Stand is an eerie hollow ring of massive shadowtop trees, named for the mage said to have perished in its center in a sorcerers' duel some centuries ago. The Mushroom Dell is a small, bowl-shaped depression in the woods where no trees stand. Always misty and shaded by huge trees around it, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Elminster: They wear a badge of 12 tiny green stars encircling a white mushroom on a brown field that signifies acceptance of their skills by war wizard inspectors.





damp dell is carpeted in mushrooms (many edible) and mosses. Some of the mosses and 'shrooms, locals insist, cover the bones of brigands slain here in a fight with Purple Dragons long, long ago.

For an extra coin or two, all of these guides can take you off the trails to some overgrown ruins that are said to be the remnants of early, long-fallen noble families' keeps. Local lore says they're crammed with ghosts and treasure and liberally provided with monster-haunted underground catacombs—but then, local legend in Cormyr rarely says anything else.

Most hunters are happy to leave the Stead with several hearty meals, some salted and barreled meat for their larders that they slew themselves (or, in the case of the more inept or weaker hunters, that they helped their guide slay), and perhaps a stuffed and mounted head of their kill to proudly display on some wall or other if they bagged a stag or boar of respectable size. Several locals dress these stuffed heads to finished form for 5 to 10 gp per head, depending on the size of the head and how quickly the finished piece is desired. The best is Old Martya, two cottages west of the Stead.

Some hunters, however, come back year after year in pursuit of the elusive Ghost Stag, a giant white stag said to be able to vanish when cornered, fading into nothingness. Senior war wizards who often visit the Stead tell me that the Stag is a real beast with a natural teleportation power and perhaps other psionic talents that allow it to escape spells that seek it and not any sort of undead.



# TyrLuk

This village of 270 or so folk doesn't welcome visitors except farmers from nearby, who come to market here once a tenday. Folk who must stop in Tyrluk for a night are advised to call on the local lord, the prodigiously fat, hard-drinking, roaring-old rip Suldag the Boar, and endure his boisterous hospitality. The villagers are apt to be almost hostile to strangers. Just why folk here don't like outsiders is something I haven't discovered, but I know they suffered at the hands of brigands and swindling merchants who were lords before Suldag for many years.

There's not much to see in Tyrluk anyway: a smithy, a carter, and cottages. Most locals work for Charn the Smith or Oglul's Cartworks. At the south end of the village sits the pony ranch of Silturr Shadowshield, a producer of top-quality mountain mounts for the Purple Dragons in High Horn and anyone else with coins enough. His beasts typically go for 36 to 40 gp.

As one can tell, Tyrluk's businesses can be very useful to caravans in need of new horses, horseshoes, wheels, chains, or new wagons. Locals are happy to provide these things in return for good coin of the realm but still say firmly that they don't like outsiders. Visitors are told to "camp over there," with an abrupt arm gesture indicating the location of "there."

The place indicated is a moribund farm at the north end of town. It has four grassy fields, two good wells, and several old barns. Travelers are expected to keep to it. The villagers have provided firepits, ample firewood kept dry under cover, and privies, so why not humor them? One can go places more welcoming on the morrow.

The only landmark of interest in Tyrluk

lies in the trees just west of the campground the Bowshot Run, an arrowstraight track through the forest. This flat, grassy strip of land has been cleared of all shrubs and trees, and it mysteriously stays that way. It runs from nowhere to nowhere, beginning and ending in the forest without visible ruins, cairns, or anything under ground (folk have dug looking) at its ends or along its length.

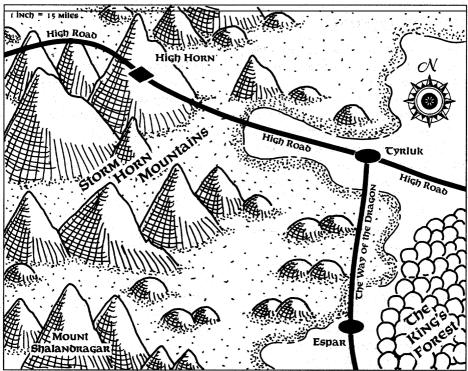
Its origins are unknown. Some sages hazard it might have been a ritual approach route to a now-vanished temple. Its name comes from the use made of it these days, since with trees along it marked for distances, it makes an ideal archery range. Visitors inclined to overstay their cool welcome are warned that most locals are very proficient with their bows and hunt to fill their cooking pots every few days.

There's one legend of Tyrluk that bears mentioning: The village is the reputed home of the Blue Blade. In Cormyr's folklore, the Blue Blade is a famous gallant brigand who stole from rich travelers on all of the roads that traversed the King's Forest but often gave gems from earlier hauls to pretty ladies when he waylaid them. If the Blue Blade were a single real man, he would have to be over 80 winters old by now. Although every fresh act of brigandry awakens fresh rumors of his involvement, there haven't been any proven sightings of him for more than 25 summers.

The Blue Blade was the original reason for war wizards being assigned to local guardhouses and ordered to accompany road patrols throughout the realm. Their seeking magic would make the career of a lone brigand foolhardy now.

When I first visited Tyrluk, I assumed the village folk were trying to hide some





brigand-related secret or other from me. The more I see of Tyrluk, and of younglings who've grown up and left it to dwell elsewhere in Cormyr, the more I think the local attitude is one of "the world is an evil place and, except for folk in need of our goods, brings us only ill." This encourages the folk of Tyrluk to have nothing to do with the outside world and to turn their backs on it whenever it comes seeking them.

## Places of Interest in Tyrluk

INNS
The Old Man's Face



The best thing about this cold, dirty road-

house is its charmingly carved signboard, which displays a kindly, smiling old man's face. There's nothing kindly about the interior unless you're a local. Outsiders meet flat, unfriendly gazes and are seated at a dark, cold corner table.

The Old Face serves as the villagers' restaurant and tavern, concentrating on bad but strong beer and simple, hearty roasts and boiled vegetables rescued from wretchedness by a variety of spiced sauces. The inn's only regular paying customers are the 14 men and four women of the local Purple Dragon garrison. The chief amusement of the locals in Tyrluk seems to be seeing which of the male soldiers will catch which of their fellow king's women to be his wife.



## Waymoot

This town<sup>30</sup> of 1,100 folk is the largest settlement inside the King's Forest and represents one of Cormyr's formerly secret defenses. Originally a muddy meeting of trails in the trees that was haunted by trolls who preyed on many travelers, Waymoot was enlarged by cutting back the woods to make a campground, and then a large compound, and later a trade center complete with a fortified keep and a cluster of horse farms that provide the Purple Dragons with quality mounts in plenty. As the local saying goes: "Ever seen a host of mounted Purple Dragons lower lances and charge? Well, they're riding Waymoot!" That saying has in turn led to a Cormyr-wide phrase for a mounted charge or thunder of approaching hooves: "Waymoot come calling."

Waymoot is a busy travelers' town. Its lifeblood is all the folk just passing through. Some of them don't even know that Cormyrean legend believes this is the true heart of the realm.

Cormyreans believe that the Obarskyr kings sleep in some spell-hidden grotto to which their essences steal after death. There they await the time when the land will need them again. When that fateful time draws down, they'll rise, ghostly blades in hand, to ride the skies and smite the foes of the realm they loved and led.

And somewhere under Waymoot is where the dead kings sleep. Where? Under the keep, some say, and point to the everpresent feeling of watchful menace that many folk feel in its lower levels as proof. This theory is supported by the occasional ringing clangs heard there, echoing from

the deeps of the earth; folk say these are the stirrings of the restless blades of the kings. Whether this is true or not, there is a special feeling about Waymoot.

The legend of the Sleeping Kings is overlaid with another tale, remembered in an old snatch of song that has become a children's rhyme throughout Cormyr:

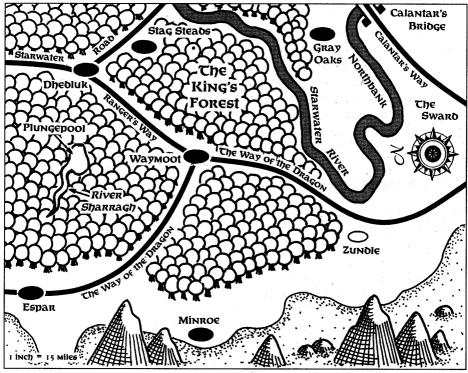
Bring me the key from dungeons deep, Where undead knights a-rusting sleep, That doth unlock the dragon's door And we'll swim in gold forevermore!

This rhyme refers to a collapsed dungeon labyrinth under central Waymoot—very real catacombs that were once the treasure vaults of a gold dragon that used its puny human form to store its gold in the abandoned undercellars of a long-vanished keep. The dragon was ultimately slain by a beholder who broke up into the cellars from a cavern below—and presumably still lairs there!

Waymootans know these tales, but other Cormyreans and outlanders are more likely to have heard of the troll raids that forced earlier kings to create the great clearing that now holds Waymoot town and of the hero who almost single-handedly held off one troll attack the local lord, Filfar Woodbrand, Though he dislikes the nickname of "Trollkiller" he earned that day, Lord Woodbrand (now a seasoned warrior) remains prodigiously strong. He's been known to hoist aloft two benches of seated drinkers at the Silver Wink, his favorite drinking spot, and carry them around the taproom without spilling a drop from anyone's tankard.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>A map of Waymoot is found in the Geography chapter of the Cormyr game accessory, in the section on smaller towns.





Folk say Lord Woodbrand halted a wagonload of fleeing thieves once by blocking the two galloping dray horses all alone and then lifting them both off the ground to bring the wagon to a halt. Then the lord set the beasts down and straightway tore the reins apart like so many cobwebs to sever them from the wagon. The thieves drew steel and stabbed at him from out of the sides of their wagon, so the lord calmly picked it up and hurled it across a field, tumbling it end over end until it came to a halt upside down and the dazed men spilled out of it. In the course of collecting them, Lord Woodbrand bent the sword of one bandit who tied to hack at him into a halfcircle before picking the man up under one arm and going on to get the others.

Many drinkers at the Wink love to

watch their lord show his strength: A favorite stunt of theirs is to play tug of war with all the visitors in the place. The lord stands alone at one end of the rope, his back to the door, and everyone else tugs against him. He usually drags everyone out of the place without any visible effort.

Once an adventuring band made the mistake of drawing weapons in a brawl in the Wink. The lord waded into the fray, plucked up each armed contestant, and hurled them over the heads of the brawling crowd and out the door. He neglected to open the door first. After that first brief and involuntary flight, a wincing local held the door open for the duration of the brawl, just in case.

The fortunate visitor may well witness Lord Woodbrand at play but should not



be tricked into arm-wrestling with him or with any Waymootan. (Any Waymootans asked to wrestle will profess weariness and ask a friend—the lord, of course—to take their place.) Needless to say, Waymootans love their lord. If you've seen him holding stallions at bay at stud sessions or helping with difficult foalings, as I have, you know why.

#### Landmarks

Waymoot today is the town of the horse. A seemingly endless supply of quality horseflesh is bred, reared, and trained here, and merchants come to Waymoot from far and wide to buy light, medium, and heavy war horses. All of the local horse farms are good: Llamskir's is perhaps the most famous, but Tirin's and Burilla's are arguably better. Kryson is the fourth of the horse farms.

Waymoot also produces wagons of high clearance, sturdy make, and nimble handling, well suited to bouncing over roots and around narrow bends on forest trails. These are popular purchases with visiting merchants.

Finally, no less than two temples, the Sheltering Hand and the Sounds of Joy stand in this out-of-the-way manmade clearing in the heart of the King's Forest. The Sheltering Hand is a temple of Tymora, and the Sounds of Joy is dedicated to Lliira.

## Places of Interest in Waymoot

Palaces

#### Lord Woodbrand's Keep

This small but soaring walled keep sports a jail built onto the outside of its north

wall and a small forest of ballistae and catapults on its battlements. Within the walls, a stables and a barracks flank the keep. The lord and his guests inhabit the ground floor of the rather damp and gloomy central castle. In winter, winds howl through this place like agonized banshees, and Lord Woodbrand goes around carrying whole felled trees to break up as firewood! Few guests see the inside of the keep, but those who do can gaze upon stag's heads as large as small cottages that are mounted on its inside the walls and protected by preservative spells that glow eerily!

## Temples The Sheltering Hand

This temple to Tymora does a brisk business in healing and aiding those who risked danger and came up short, since the goddess believes all folk should face risks. The priests here are quite generous, often charging a stiff fee for healing magic and then dispensing a hot meal and a generous purse of coins to travel on with. They don't much care what faith the folk they're aiding profess; a person aided is a person who may well turn to Tymora again in need.

The tall, dignified Chancepriest Gothric looks every inch a king as he leads his small staff of priests in worship or on Tymora's business. Under his benevolent guidance, this temple has grown rich enough to purchase a guardian golem whose presence was revealed in the last troll raid.

#### The Sounds of Joy

This temple to Lliira is led by the fey and beautiful half-elven Queen of Joy (high



priestess) Jezarai Moonbolt, a bright, calculating lady who once led her flock in the veneration of Waukeen. The festivals mounted by this holy house are wild events of nightlong costumed dancing that are often attended in force by jaded Suzailan nobles and wealthy merchants.

The goddess tells the queen of joy that a festival should be mounted a tenday hence by means of a vision, and a temple messenger is immediately sent to Suzail to spread the word. At sundown on festival night, Jezarai lies down on the altar, and Lliira signals the beginning of festivities to all by conferring a wild, continuous *shape change* on her high priestess. The dancing and carousing at these events often spills out over all Waymoot, but Lord Woodbrand always keeps a watchful eye out for thieves, perils of fire or injury, and unlawful mayhem.

### Shops

Waymoot has few shops of note; they all seem to sell travelers' gear, though there's a good local bakery, too. None of the travelers' shops is particularly bad, but none of them are particularly outstanding either. Because of the clientele who like to gather there, the most interesting of these shops is:

## Nightstar Guiding & Outfitters

Travelers' Gear

This well-equipped shop sells ropes, cord, wire, maps, boots, and other travelers' gear to all. Among the gear it stocks are blankets, packs, chests, candles, torches, lamp oil in rigid belt boxes, and tents. It is a popular gathering place for adventurers and foresters, who meet over brandy or herb teas here and tell of what's befallen them. It's widely—and correctly, let me attest—rumored that the proprietress, the ranger Liriel Nightstar, is a Harper.<sup>31</sup>

## Taverns The Moon and Stars



This large tavern is a gathering place for all sorts of colorful characters, from retired pirates who are now local horse-breeders to active adventurers. A smattering of centaurs, swanmays, and even faerie dragons are apt to be visiting on any given night. It was here that Florin Falconhand of the Knights of Myth Drannor first met his bride-to-be, the ranger Dove, and it was here that King Azoun was attacked by a Zhentarim mage who shapechanged into a beholder. The mage was slain by a ki-rin in disguise who'd been quietly playing cards in a corner with several old men.

Order is kept in this potentially explosive mix of clientele by a veteran staff of rangers and ex-adventurers who are all allowed to bear weapons by the king's decree. They always have a war wizard (or two) on duty to summon more powerful aid if need be.

The "Moonstars" serves Cormyr as a meeting ground for the dangerous and the exotic. It is close enough to Suzail for citizens of the capital to reach it, and far enough away to avoid frightening them or starting unwelcome rumors. More

<sup>31</sup> Elminster: Sigh. She's a 7th-level ranger, if ye must tell the world.



than once envoys from supposedly unfriendly realms and powers, such as pirate lords, Blades from Mulmaster, or agents of Thay, have quietly met with Vangerdahast or senior Cormyrean mages and nobles of Cormyr here to discuss matters of state and trade that neither side wanted made more public. Needless to say, the Moonstars offers private gaming and drinking chambers for those who need or want to be discreet.

If you visit, you may see such exalted folk as are mentioned above. More likely though, you'll just sit, watch the passing parade, and enjoy the pickles, hot buns spread with pâtés, diced fruit, and cheese-stuffed fried mushroom caps served here—all accompanied by your choice of the contents of a superb wine cellar and a substantial selection of brews.

The Moonstars is one of the great taverns of the world, worthy of any land or exalted guest. It is not to be missed.

## INNS Beruintar's Hone Warmer

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The least-known of Waymoot's inns, this is the "overflow" inn where folk who can't get rooms at the better places must stay. It's also the chosen abode of exotic visitors such as lizard men or minotaurs who're part of chartered adventuring bands (but are watched suspiciously nonetheless).

The inn consists of warm but unexciting rooms, a hot communal bath on each floor, and a small, unvarying menu of soup, hot breads, and teas. Guests should be careful in the baths, as several

folk have been surprised while unclad and near-weaponless in these chambers and have been murdered by rivals.

Overall, I'd call this place adequate.

#### The Cup and Spoon



As its name suggests, this inn aims to be Waymoot's largest and best dining spot, and it seems to be succeeding. In fact, on some nights its loud and crowded dining hall can bother overnight guests desiring a restful evening. Many locals come here to partake of the ever-more-exotic dishes prepared by the halfling chefs of the Whistletar family in their bid to overshadow the kitchens of the more famous Silver Wink.

Three rentable reception rooms and a communal hot bath separate the dining hall from the guests' chambers. The guest rooms are tidy and comfortably furnished. The lofty feather comforters on the beds in winter are a nice touch.

The Cup and Spoon aims for a well-lit, clean, wholesome feel, discouraging escorts, adventurers, drunks, and sometimes just folk who look dangerous or disreputable from staying the night. If you like such security, this is the place for you.

#### The Old Man

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The most traditional of Waymoot's inns, this is a house of large fireplaces, old shields hung everywhere on dark, old, wood-paneled walls, and bald-headed men nearly as ancient snoring against them. I felt like I was stepping back in



time, but many folk love such places. The floors, stairs, and furniture are all smooth with age, no one speaks loudly, complimentary zzar and brandy sit on sideboards by every fire, and the servants are never seen. While I was there, two old ex-Purple Dragons were searching for secret passages with the excited glee of young children. They found some, too.

#### The Silver Wink



The Wink is the most famous of Waymoot's inns and, as mentioned earlier, is Lord Woodbrand's favorite. Its name comes from its signboard, which features a glowing silver sliver of a moon—not a winking lass, as some might think.

This large establishment boasts an excellent dining room. (I recommend ordering the stuffed stream crabs or the succulent stag.) The inn's tastefully furnished guest rooms vary in size from single warrior's bunks to suites of six large chambers, but all quarters, even the singles, have attached garderobes and robing rooms. And the Wink's taproom has drinkables unmatched in breadth and quantity this side of Waterdeep.

Want to try wine from Evermeet? If you're wealthy, it's here. Ever wonder what they drink in Zakhara or fabled Shou Lung? Here too. Thirsty for royal Tethyrian vintages looted from castle cellars when civil war broke out? Plenty in stock. Want to try a precious bottle of ancient blackrun wine wrested from the claws of baatezu in lost Myth Drannor?

There's only one left, but for a mere 1,000 gp it's yours. There's even a ceramic bottle of sherry available for a "mere" 3,500 gp. It's from a king's tomb in Mulhorand and is reputed to confer magical powers on its drinker.

While you're making do with a far less expensive vintage, you can watch somewhat inebriated folk trying to impress each other on the dance floor to the accompaniment of skilled visiting minstrels or the surprisingly good house trio, the Silvershawms.<sup>32</sup> And if you're lucky, it will be a day when one of the Waymootan forest patrols has come back with a kill from the depths of the forest. If so, you can try a slice of mouth-watering roast whole boar basted in garlic butter and Arabellan dry (or some other ruby wine when a caravan has brought something from Calimshan or the Tashalar) for hours. Even if it is not a day for roast boar, the Wink always offers a green icerime dessert made of a sweet minty milk jelly that is set on ice in glass goblets to harden. It is fit for the gods!

Festive dance evenings at the Wink end in a last bittersweet song to the gods for a brighter morrow, and then things break up into little groups of late-night talkers. A wakeful guest who takes care to look inconspicuous can hear a lot of *very* interesting things about goings-on in the realm.

The floors at the Wink are soundproofed by thick, soft rugs and many tapestries to prevent late-night conversation from bothering sleepers. When one finally does go to bed, there's a warm drink waiting in a towel-wadded coffer near the bed. In truth, this is a wonderful place!

<sup>32</sup>The Silvershawms are composed of Purple Dragons in the hundred-strong Waymoot garrison.







# The EastReaches



n ancient Faerûnian saying<sup>1</sup> runs: "Every realm has a frontier, no matter how crowded or civilized." The east reaches are Cor-

myr's present frontier, and, some sages insist, its future. Others say the true frontier, the lands that Cormyr will look to after the east reaches are crowded and settled, is the west reaches. Still others give that honor to the Stonelands and Goblin Marches, seeing Cormyr ultimately as a realm stretching from the Far Hills to the Thunder Peaks, bounded on the north by Anauroch and on the south by everything on the south shore of the Lake of Dragons that Westgate can't hold against the troops of Cormyr.

## An East Reach Overview

There's a saying in the east reaches: "We only have one lake in Cormyr, but it's a big one." This reference to the huge Wyvernwater is, of course, false. Cormyr has many lakes and ponds too small and remote to feature on most maps. In fact, it is hard to get far from the sound of water running or crashing on the shore in the Forest Kingdom. Still, the Wyvernwater dominates and divides the east reaches of the kingdom into the more settled and pastoral southern region between the Wyvernwater and the Way of

the Manticore and the frontier wilderness of the northern region. This northern region is where Cormyr is likely to expand in years to come, filling in the unsettled territories between Tilverton and Arabel. Two large areas need to be tamed for that expansion to be a happy and prosperous one: Hullack Forest, a great hiding place for brigands and predatory monsters, and the Stonelands.

Dragons also inhabit the Thunder Peaks. A sizable faction of war wizards. led by Vangerdahast, see the taming of a flight of dragons to be an essential part of securing the east reaches of the realm. They want to create an aerial strike force/patrol force of mages armed with wands on dragonback. A more realistic and immediate goal is to catch and tame some of the hippogriffs found in large wings<sup>2</sup> in the Thunder Peaks. They're most numerous near the source of the Immerflow, where lost mines lie in several high valleys. These mines were abandoned by humans and dwarves centuries ago after vicious attacks from hobgoblin clans that still lair in the area.

Natural resources may yet draw intruders and Cormyreans alike into the east reaches of Cormyr. The Thunder Peaks are known to hold many valuable ores and some gem deposits. The spices ateris and bentilan can also be gathered up and down the east reaches<sup>3</sup> in the foothills of both the Thunder Peaks and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This saying is probably Netherese in origin, as folk in Halruaa use it but can't remember who said it. <sup>2</sup>Some use the word *herds* instead; others prefer the term *scraveys*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For more on these substances, consult the Common Life in the Mountains chapter of *The Thunder Peaks and Storm Homs* booklet of the *Elminster's Ecologies* boxed set.



the Storm Horns. Bentilan berries are worth 2 sp per pound; the short-lived ateris buds bring only about 3 cp a pound. Moreover, the trees in the depths of Hullack Forest hold future mast spars and roof beams that are growing increasingly valuable as monsters make logging the untouched parts of the Elven Court more and more perilous.

## Small Settlements

Setting dreams aside, it's clear that the east reaches just north of the Wyvernwater are fast being settled, and places like Redspring may soon grow to prominence. The land is rolling hill country, with scrub woods and gorse growing in profusion. Small ravines hold tiny, tinkling brooks that run down, ultimately, to the Wyvernwater. Of old, wyverns were numerous in the area (hence the lake's name), but they were largely exterminated centuries ago. Yet, other perils remain. Monsters of all sorts raid the area from the Stonelands and from Hullack Forest. They have been bolstered in recent years by brigands and orc and goblin bands sponsored by the Zhentarim of Darkhold.4

As a result of such perils, settlements in the reaches tend to be small and stockaded. Though settlements in this area are few in number and can be of crucial importance to a lost or harried traveler, I've left significant discussion of several of the less remarkable places out of this book. For travelers' reference,

notes on a few of these communities follow.

### Bospin

The quintessential sheep market town, this dusty gathering of cottages stands at a trailmoot in the midst of many sheep and cattle ranches clustered around three deep wells. The only good road to it links it with the East Way to the north. The stink of sheep dung is everywhere.

Bospir isn't an inspiring place to visit unless you love wool, fancy lamb on your table, or want to buy and sell the beasts. The Drover's Inn is the only place to stay overnight, though there are plenty of rooming houses that let rooms by the tenday. The Nightbleat Tavern is regularly rocked by drunken brawls, as sheepshearers let loose on each other. The Nightbleat's name is a shining example of Bospiran humor.

#### Ghans

Standing just within raiding reach of the Vast Swamp, Ghars boasts a respectable Purple Dragon garrison. The garrison is regarded by all in the town as an impartial and incorruptible police force. Its presence has led to the growth of this village into a town of some 1,200 folk. It serves the farmers for miles around as a market town, and many a wagon of radishes or fruit that arrives in Suzail as "Hultail's best" actually came from the stalls here. Fruits and vegetables from the farmers' market must be rushed by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>This long-held belief has been proven through magical questioning. It is also supported by the many "black" rings (amulets of proof against detection and location) worn by the members of such bands, rings they would normally not have the resources or luck to obtain in quantity.



fast coaches, changing horses many times along the way, to get the goods to Marsember or Suzail before they spoil.

Ghars has wells but no plentiful water; its grist mill is ox-driven. Its largest exports are oats, barley, and wheat, which can be shipped slowly to Hultail and thence by barge<sup>5</sup> to Wheloon.

The arrival of the Purple Dragons brought other services to Ghars, notably a smith of some skill named Aunsible Durn. Folk come for miles to buy his tools, plowshares, scythes, and horseshoes. Its all the rage among the wealthier farmers to equip their laborers with halberds, bills, or pikes from Durn "so that we can do our bit, if the realm should-gods on their thrones forbidbe invaded." Many locals think these squires really just want an excuse to parade around in grand-looking armor at every wedding and festival day while "protected" by a ramshackle honor guard.

Visitors should note that Ghars has two forgettable, but not dreadful, inns: the Sheaf of Wheat and the Silver Scythe. It also host a rather pleasant, if rustic, tavern, the Bold Bard.

### Griffon Hill

This eminence is a rocky height adorned with little more than an inn that has been burned down repeatedly by orc raiders and a few fortified cottages inhabited by hardy shepherd folk. The cottages have good wells, and there's rumored to be a cavern in the heart of the hill that the villagers can all retreat into if necessary, so

folk stay despite the danger. (Legend whispers that the cavern goes down into the Underdark and that the villagers know how to retreat there if in dire straits.)

Three priests of Chauntea dwell at Griffon Hill, and they're the only healers of consequence for miles around. One of the Chaunteans is also now powerful enough to defend the settlement by conjuring earth elementals or controlling the weather. To bring in extra cash, these priests sell holy water and, on occasion, heal for hire. They order needed goods from Arabel by means of several loyal messengers.

Brigands have tricked the folk of Griffon Hill before, and so their initial hospitality is rather thin. They leave the worst cottage open for visitors, a *faerie fire* glow marking its open door. Within are firewood, a bar for the door, straw cots, hitching rings for horses, and several stoppered jugs of water.

The traveler reaches Griffon Hill by following the Stonebolt Trail. It is located due east of the fabled goblin burial ground at the spot on most maps where the trail is shown changing direction. It's not a place many nonadventurers ever see, though peddlers make it a regular stop to sell their wares, buy wool, purchase travel pots of spiced mutton stew. The griffons the hill is named for are long gone.

## Halfhap

Halfhap was located on the edge of Cormyr until the annexation of Tilverton.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>As always, road transport costs about four times what it does to ship by water, and more if there isn't much of a road linking the source with any other important place.



This walled town is growing in importance as Cormyr expands into the north-eastern lands. It is a no-nonsense, bleak place that exists to supply prospectors, traveling merchants, and outlying ranchers operating in region surrounding the upper Immerflow and the Stonelands.

Halfhap is protected by keeps at either end of its oval—well, giant-potato-shaped—ring of walls, wherein Purple Dragons dwell in strength. These Purple Dragons have hippogriff steeds, and their keeps sport numerous ballistae that are backed by a huge subterranean armory of ballistae ammunition reached by a winched lift.

Over a thousand of Halfhap's roughly 2,200 folk are soldiers. Monsters and Zhent-sponsored forces out of the Stonelands have attacked this area often. They still do so, especially each spring, when orcs who've grown restless and short of food over the winter boil down from the heart of the Desertsmouth Mountains and raid across northern Cormyr.

Patrols out of Halfhap travel the Moonsea Ride regularly as far as Mootpost, halfway to Tilverton, and Gnollpost, in the heart of Gnoll Pass. At Mootpost the garrison at Tilverton takes over patrol duties, and at Gnollpost, the forces from Castle Crag assume these duties. Halthap's patrols do a good job keeping the road safe, but the town they're based in has the feel—and the welcoming charm—of an armed camp.

Travelers stay here because they must take shelter while on the road or they have dealings with the shops here that supply food, tools, remounts, weapons, rope, and other supplies to folk using Halfhap as a base. (These shops need endless resupplies to keep their shelves full.)

Travelers don't come to see the scenic sites of Halfhap because there aren't any. For those who must stay here, I recommend the Marching Myrmidon inn, the Doffed Cloak festhall, and Eversheld's Embers tavern. I hear an enterprising halfling clan, the Blacknee family, has set up shop in Halfhap with an eye to building a large inn with luxury baths, a dining room to be proud of, and suchlike. I await news of so welcome and unlikely an establishment opening. Travelers through Halfhap in the year ahead are asked to keep me posted.

#### Hillmarch

This is the closest thing to a mining town to be found in eastern Cormyr. Copper and a little silver, zinc, and nickel are the metals taken out of the Gnoll Peaks north of Hillmarch.

The old Cormyrean expression "Ye've as much brass as all Hillmarch" reflects the town's chief product. Though there is a farmers' market here and a Purple Dragon garrison in tiny Hillmarch Keep to guard the vital local brass industry from brigands, most of the town is given over to smoke-belching smelters, the shops and warehouses of brasscasters, and heaps of slag and leavings. An everpresent stink hangs over the town, and it's not a healthy place to live: The Grave Hills, south of the town, attest to how many locals die young—or just die, period.

None of this stops rowdy miners from drinking themselves into a state of rage



and brawling in, atop, and around just about every building in town that isn't shuttered and barred against them on their rare days off. It's a fearsome sight, I'm told. War wizards have often been called in to use spells to control the struggling men. Even the direct threat of leveled Purple Dragon halberds and blades hasn't make them falter in their mayhem on several occasions. Such bold disrespect for authority is unthinkable elsewhere in law-abiding Cormyr.

Located not far east of Castle Crag, Hillmarch is within easy reach of either the East Way (a day's ride) or the Mountain Ride. However, I can't recommend a visit to Hillmarch unless you wish to deal in brass castings. Local crafters make exquisite lamps, candelabras, thuribles, household ornaments, and small, useful everyday items.

Those with a taste for adventure are advised that the mines of Hillmarch tunnel ever northward—and deeper—into the Gnoll Peaks, whose gnolls were exterminated long, long ago. The miners have failed to turn up anything of more interest than an underground river. Its inky flow—so far unexplored—rises in one place and descends in a subterranean falls in another, presumably into the Underdark. No monsters of note have yet been reported, though there are persistent rumors of the weird creatures known as executioner's hoods attacking miners.

The miners all live in boarding houses or mining company barracks. The mining companies all have prosaic names: High Pick Delvings and Motherlode Ores are the best-known. In truth, the mining companies have all long since been bought up by

the various large trading costers based in Cormyr's cities and elsewhere, and so they have little independent identity left aside from their colorful names.

Hillmarch has seven or eight taverns but only one inn. The number of taverns varies, depending on how badly they've been damaged in recent brawls. The inn is called the Shovel of Sparkling Stones. It's a converted smelter that hasn't been converted all that much, if you know what I mean. Those desiring luxurious accommodations shouldn't travel to Hillmarch.

### Redspring

Iron in the soil around Redspring colors the springs that rise here a rust-red and makes the water taste like old blood. The water does nourish, however, and it never fails, even in the iciest winter weather, so Redspring is one of the most reliable sources of water around. The Sunset Stream flows from it to feed the Starwater near its source.

Redspring has always been a shepherds' moot. Though it was abandoned for long periods when the Stonelands made these northern moors too dangerous to enter, Redspring is a booming center of expansion today. Like Dawngleam far to the south, it's been chosen by the Crown for new construction. A Purple Dragon garrison has been installed in its own tiny keep. It is guarding work crews who're throwing up earthen ramparts as fast as they can in a wide ring that will enclose, it is hoped, a respectable town in the future.

Many merchants are taking advantage of the Crown boon (moneys pro-



vided by the royal treasury for the building of shops and establishing businesses) and are rushing up to Redspring. Most of them have brought their own hired bodyguards, obviously not trusting the Purple Dragons to defend them against raids from the Stonelands. This trickle of traders turned into a steady stream when the Crown installed four war wizards in a newly built mansion in the center of Redspring, and the locals have watched in disbelief as each day brings new faces.

Redspring is a place of golden opportunity, but I can't recommend it as a destination for travelers yet. There's no inn, the tavern is no more than a serving window where patrons must stand out in the weather to place their orders, and there's nary a building stone to be had for miles. Workers are digging deep pits just outside the earthen walls to get more construction stone.

Redspring has a muddy morass rather than roads, and many unfinished buildings are sited here, there, and everywhere, so the chaos of transport may well continue when all building is complete. Moreover, a very hard winter or renewed Zhentarim strength may yet sweep Redspring away into rubble. (Folk have reported seeing mages flying over the growing town, observing the activities below while mounted on the fearsome beasts known as fevwings.) Still, if you follow the way of Tymora or merely like to gamble, this is a place where fortunes may soon be made. Watch for a comprehensive entry on Redspring in a future edition of this guidebook.6

## Slingdyke

This defensive earthworks stands on the west side of the Mountain Ride at the spot where the Dragon Trail to Hillmarch (and thence, the East Way) meets it. Originally the site of a hilltop fort overwhelmed by orcs in the early days of the realm, Slingdyke has been held by many forces over the years. It is named for the courageous last stand of a Purple Dragon patrol against a huge band of orcs. The Cormyrean soldiers used their slings and the rubble of the long-destroyed fort to heap the corpses of their foes around the dike by the hundreds ere they fell.

Today, all stones large enough to build with are gone, and the steep-sided hill is bare except for a beacon that Purple Dragons light to warn all who see it that orcs or other invading forces are nigh. A deep well of clear water is set into a cleft on the side of the hill that faces the Dragon Trail (the southeast side), and below it stands a lone duskwood tree.

An inn once stood on the northeast corner of the trailmoot here, but it burned down almost a decade ago. It hasn't been rebuilt by royal decree, which is something of a mystery. The reasons for the decree are rumored to have something to do with a curse or unresolved peril lurking in or above the burnt, tumbled stones of the inn. (One tale talks of an invisible door high in the air.) A Purple Dragon guardpost is located in a rather ugly little walled compound, complete with a small keep, just east of the ruins, but they refused to discuss the demise of the Slingdyke Arms with me. The guard I spoke with sug-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: Future edition? Ye should live so long!



gested my curiosity would be "better employed poking about elsewhere in the realm."

Interestingly, the only two farms within sight of Slingdyke's ring of earthen ramparts are inhabited by one family that I'm sure are Harpers and another that look for all the world like a war wizard with a bodyguard of poorly disguised Purple Dragons. Some mystery sleeps at Slingdyke—and the whole realm may learn its secrets yet.

Though no inn or tavern remains at this place, the easternmost farm houses a competent blacksmith who's probably a Purple Dragon. He makes a living shoeing beasts that pass on the road. The stables and paddock that once belonged to the inn, located in the southeast corner of the trailmoot, have been maintained by the Purple Dragon detachment stationed here as a campground for passersby to use for free. There's a huge horse pond at the back of the stables, several fire pits, and ample stored straw and firewood at the ready.

A half-day's ride south of Slingdyke is the Laughing Head, a stone marker of forgotten origins that stands just west of the road in a thicket of young felsul trees. About 12 feet tall, it is capped by a sculpted, mirthful human head and shoulders. Legend says folk present at just the right time—when the rays of the rising moon on a particular night of the year first touch the head—hear the head laugh and speak. Its words are said to be a cryptic challenge. They be combined with an inscription that appears on the front of the marker only at that special time. The words and the

inscription combined to give the directions to something or some place hidden. This thing or place is something war wizards and agents of the Crown won't talk about but which legend insists is far older than the Sword Heralds. In fact, it may have something to do with the dragons who inhabited the lands in the area before there was a Cormyr.

#### Sunset Hill

Sunset Hill is named for its gold tinge at sunset, when it holds the light of the sinking sun long after the lower land around it. This high, grassy hill east of Bospir is a natural spot for a fortress, but its crown holds only sheep, though long ago gibbets stood on the hill.

It is no great surprise that Sunset Hill is haunted. Ghostly apparitions of floating, upright, dangle-headed human corpses appear on its summit on some nights. Local farmers' lore insists that any sheep on the hill at such times are transformed into the leathery-winged monsters known as dark horrors. The dark horrors fly off to attack lone folk and livestock all over the countryside, and they change back into their bewildered sheep selves in the morning—if they survive that long.

Water is plentiful around the base of the hill. No less than three ponds are scattered about, fed by springs welling up from the heart of the hill. Many cottages cluster around the ponds, so Sunset Hill could be said to be a settlement—a far-flung hamlet without any center or governor—of about 1,000 folk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>For more about the Sword Heralds, see Appendix II of this guidebook.



## Yeoman Bridge

This hamlet is a cluster of farms centered on a covered bridge that gives the community its name. Yeoman Bridge carries the Immer Trail over the Sword River (also known as the River Arabel). The Sword River flows southeast from the rocky height known as Arabel Springs, just south of the city of Arabel, to join the Wyvernwater just below the bridge.

The bridge itself is an impressive stone structure adorned with sculpted stone shields displaying the arms of families ennobled for their service to the Crown in battles long ago. The bridge is composed of two 200-foot-long spans that rest on a massive natural plug of rock, an islet once crowned by an evil wizard's tower. The destruction of the tower caused a wild magic area that survives today. It forms a sphere englobing the entire bridge.

The north span of the bridge is covered with log walls and a board roof, and this shelter is often used by caravans whose wagons must stop over for a night in rain or snowstorms. The roof over the southern span collapsed some years ago under the weight of heavy winter snows, and it remains open to the sky.

Local Purple Dragons disagree with most locals as to whether this roof should be rebuilt. They say its presence would make the bridge a firetrap and provide invading forces with cover from the arrows of defenders on the southern riverbank. Some farmers also oppose the restoration of the south span's roof. They say restoring the roof would allow all travelers to shelter in the bridge overnight, bringing the scant business done by the local inn to an end.

The local inn does little trade because it's a dreadful, dirty shack whose owner, a retired Purple Dragon called Thorm Ultigar, is too large and aggressive for anyone to dare to tell him how lousy his cooking really is. He also hasn't cleaned out the chimneys since he bought the place, so smoke from the kitchen fires fills the entire roadhouse constantly.

This stellar house is called the Water Witch's Rest. The unmarked grave of a locally legendary sorceress, Aierann Yurlann, is said to lie beneath the main hearthstone in the inn's common room. Thorm takes a very dim view of guests who try to lift the stone to take a look. There's said to be a curse on the witch's coffin that causes anyone touching it to shapechange slowly and constantly, one limb at a time. Thorm has, however, been known to change his mind when offered a sufficient amount in gold coins (several hundred at least).

The witch's spellbooks are reputed to lie at the end of a flooded tunnel leading down from her coffin towards the lake. They are said to rest in the lair of some water monster that's slain over 20 adventurers since Thorm started counting—and burying—them in his yard. The adventurers keep coming because Aierarm Yurlann is said to have perfected a contingency shapechange spell that she wore constantly and that saved her life in many sorcerous duels.

There's little else in Yeoman Bridge to tempt the traveler except fresh eggs and the occasional goose to be had from local farmers. The farmers may in turn wish to buy good boots (a constant need on the muddy Wyernwater shores), tools, and other goods not made locally.



## Hultail

This village of 360-odd folk is the largest port on the Wyvernwater. It is the home of the Trindar Shipyards, where almost all of the vessels that ply the vast Wyvernwater are made. It is enriched by all the trade that flows between Cormyr and the Dalelands along the Thunder River and through the High Dale. (This water route has long been the best way to enter or leave Cormyr unseen.) Vangerdahast has been increasingly concerned about this, and a war wizard, one Fractus, recently retired to study in his own tower just east of Hultail. Few doubt that he's in regular spell communication with the powers in Suzail.

Hultail is reputed to be the site of a fairy ring atop a hill, where elves dance once or twice a year. The elves dwell or sleep in the heart of the hill the rest of the time.<sup>8</sup>

Another colorful local legend concerns the Ring of Swords: nine black blades that rise, dripping, from the lake and flash out at Hultail's foes. It is said only a worshiper of Tempus can call them forth, and once each blade slays something, they all sink down again and cannot be found or called forth until at least nine days have passed?

Hultail is both a fishing village and a fish hatchery and it never seems to run out of fish. I've discovered what few Cormyreans know: A monster called a deepspawn, which spews forth lesser creatures more or less constantly, is kept close-guarded in the Spawnhall by the docks. It churns out fish for local tables and to sell in Suzail. Excess

fish are plowed into local farm fields to enrich them. All fish that spoil are milled into fish meal and sold to Sembian farmers.

### Places of Interest in Hultail

Unique Sites

#### Spawnhall

This imposing structure, with its arched roof, houses Hultail's fish hatchery tanks and is guarded by no less than 40 Purple Dragons armed with hand crossbows that fire darts envemoned with sleep poison. The economic prosperity of Hultail is obviously seen as crucial to the Cormyrean hold on the sparsely settled eastern lands of the realm! Visits to the view the interior must be arranged with Lord Redbeard in Wheloon or at the Court in Suzail. Only fish meal is sold to private merchants here, at 60 gp per wagonload (wagon not included).

Shops
Trindar Shipyards
Boats, Ships, and Rafts

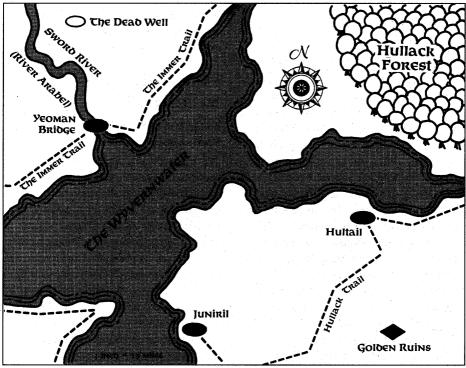
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This famous complex of docks, sheds, cranes, and slipways looks like the aftermath of a battle, but out of its noise, piles of scrap lumber, and reigning chaos comes boat after boat of sturdy usefulness (if not beauty), used by fisherfolk on the Wyvernwater. Surdan is the senior shipmaster now, and he can turn out a small sloop in two tendays at a cost of 500 gp or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Elminster: They do no such thing. This mistaken belief got its start long ago when Myth Drannan elves chose this site for a hilltop meeting with other elves and arrived via *gates* that seemed to humans watching from a distance to open into the hill.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Elminster: This one's true, but anyone who knows the word of activation can call the swords up. No, I'm not giving it here, but it's graven in stone somewhere in Hultail, for those who care to go looking. They act as nine separate blade barriers. They fly up to half a mile from Hultail's docks and continue to strike until each blade has dealt 66 points of damage, claimed a life, or all the foes of Hultail are gone, whichever befalls first. I don't know why Tempus enacted this here. I suspect there was once a temple to him where the docks now stand.





a large raft in half that time but for the same price. He can complete a good-sized fishing boat suitable for a crew of two (can sail with up to 12 on board) in a month for 1,200 gp or more. The price goes up as the fittings and size increase.

## ResTaurants The Plate of Eels



I've never taken to plates of fresh, slithering freshwater eels the way coast folk in Cormyr do, but this place also serves other dishes that are not quite as revolting: roasted chicken with almonds, crayfish, clams, and freshwater fish. They serve good strong beer here, and there is not a bad view over the water, either.

#### Taverns

#### The Blue Dragon's Bones



Named for the destruction of a blue dragon on this site at the hands of a long-ago wizard, this is a typical dark-and-dirty tavern. It's rowdy but has good ale.

## INNS The Sixcandles Inn

SSSS BBB

The Sixcandles is old, and these days it relies too much on its reputation. It's looking a little frayed and worn around the edges. But, it is the only place in town to stay unless you buy—yes, buy—a house!



## Juniril

This little village<sup>10</sup> of 700 has to be the *blandest* place I've visited. Folk spend their days fishing and weaving rushes from nearby marshes. Don't expect to find excitement, though trade can be brisk if you've useful wares to sell.

I could find only two local things of interest: the High Helm and the ruins of Helm's Everpresent Shield, a temple of Helm. The High Helm is a landmark inn, tavern, and festhall. As one local put it dryly, "They decided to store all the excitement in one spot so's we can sleep in the rest." The ruins of the temple are considered sacred, so don't enter or disturb anything there.

The High Helm stands at the south edge of Juniril, and the walled stables, barracks, and jail of the Purple Dragons lie at the northern limits. The Purple Dragons keep a seven-sword contingent in the village; most are veteran female officers. All around Juniril are fruit farms among bogs. The only local peril is doppleganger attacks from the bogs. Officers pursuing the dopplegangers into the bogs have thus far fallen afoul of mimics and traps.

The temple's never been rebuilt because of the Curse of the Blood Royal. Centuries ago, brigands waylaid the





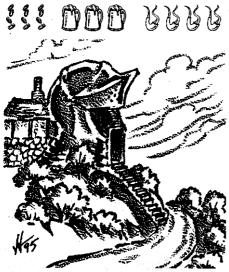
Princess Kathla Obarskyr here. Pinned to the temple doors by a sword, the dying princess choked out her curse. The temple erupted in beams of light that struck each brigand, and each beam became a sword, transfixing its victim. The curse kept the bloodthirsty fools alive, writhing in agony. None dared touch them for fear of the curse, and they staggered about Cormyr until wolves, hunger, or winter cold felled them. Tales are still told by the fireside on cold winter nights of skeletons seen stumbling around the backlands with glowing blades through them, though it always seems that friends of the taletellers saw the skeletons, not the speakers themselves.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>The location of Juniril and the villages and geographic features that surround it can be seen on the map found in the entry on Gladehap, in the Coast chapter of this guidebook.



## The High Helm

Tavern/Inn/Festhall



As one rides into Juniril from either road, one is immediately struck by the sight of a huge warrior's helm looming above a bend in the road. As one draws nearer, rusting rivets can be seen holding down a mazework of edges under the silvery paint. Finally, it becomes obvious that the helm is actually an old glass-firing oven encased in cobbled-together scraps of armor just for show. It's an impressive landmark nonetheless, and many a traveler who's never laid eyes on it before finds it with ease.

#### The Place

Warriors think of the Helm as home, a place where they'll be welcomed and recognized. It's a warm, strangely cozy place despite the rough-hewn decor and well-used benches, tables, and chairs. The reg-

ular patrons, who are fighting men from all over the Dragonreach, love it and try hard to keep it a neutral, safe ground where feuds are set aside and all can relax.

Old shields and scraps of armor are hammered to the pillars and walls to keep the risk of fire to a minimum, and the floor is a mix of gravel, marble scraps, and flagstones for the same reason. Lighting is by candle and candle lantern, with candle wheels<sup>11</sup> overhead. No less than three rather rustic staircases ascend from the sprawling, labyrinthine taproom to the floors above. I heard several Purple Dragons use the rather charitable term "wandering" to describe the stairs. The taproom is where all meals and drinks are consumed, unless one pays 5 gp per night for one of the private dining/meeting rooms behind the kitchens.

There are two floors above the taproom, and they are a regular warren of bedrooms, twisting passages, broom closets, and little bowers or alcoves where patrons can relax (perhaps in the company of a professional escort on staff). Only the gods know how the staff members find their ways around. I know I wasn't the only guest to go blundering into someone else's room (interrupting several interesting trysts— but those are tales for another time) and wander the place for quite some time, trying to find a stair back down.

### The Prospect

The Helm is a good place to settle down for a tenday or so and just relax. No one bothers you. In fact, talk in the halls is discour-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>A candle wheel is an old wagon wheel fitted with a ring of candles in metal bowls to catch the wax. It hangs from ceiling pulleys on chains and can readily be lowered to replace, light, or extinguish the candles. In rowdier establishments candle wheels are often lowered abruptly down atop the heads of foes as weapons.



aged; boisterous merrymaking is to be kept to the taproom or behind closed doors.

The rooms and food are simple but dependable. The place feels like home, especially after one traverses an upper passage and sees a man snoring in a chair with his feet in an adjacent chair and his boots shucked onto the floor beside him, or when one goes down to the kitchens of a morning to be passed by yawning warriors who're wearing not much more than boots and sleepy expressions! Like home, too, service is casual and friendly. However, it is only available downstairs. If you want something, you must go and get it, not ring a bell or call for a passage servant.

Priests of Helm and Tempus are on staff (as quartermaster and stablemaster, respectively) to administer to the hurts and spiritual needs of warrior guests. They tolerate not only each other but a small chapel to Tymora that opens off one end of the taproom hard by the doors to the jakes, behind the unmarked blue curtain at the south end of the room.

#### The Provender

Food in the Helm is apt to be of the roastsand-stews variety, with much emphasis on beer and mustards as marinades. Small fowl on spits can be had at any time of day, and they are always good. Morningfest usually features frybread (lovely) and bacon (too salty). The rest of the day, ask for the fried potatoes in mushroom broth (superb, even cold). A cold platter of salt fish, strong cheese, and radishes can be had at any time in the kitchens (3 cp, paid on the spot).

Not surprisingly the drink is plentiful and cheap. The usual ales (bitter black, Elminster's choice, and suzale) are supplemented by Vilhon cider, clarry, and a small selection of wines comprised of whatever the proprietors can get in from ships calling at Suzail. There is, of course, house ale and wine, too. Both are made in the stables, but it's best not to dwell too much on this. The taste of both is fine. The Helm features a thoughtful touch that many grander houses would do well to adopt: In every room, covered clay pots hold sliced nutbread, a spreading knife, and jars of nut-and-berry jam, so that one never wants for a bite. Covered jugs of mint water also stand by every bed. These touches are simple but satisfying.

#### The Prices

Any meal is 1 sp per platter or 2 sp per skewer. A skewer typically holds three good-sized roast fowl and as many onions or sprouts. Drinks are 4 cp per tankard or 7 sp per bottle for wine. A few, rarely available vintages can be as expensive as 12 gp per bottle. Most guests stick to the house drinks, which cost 3 cp per tankard for the ale (robust and even nutty—not bad at all) and 5 cp per tallglass or 4 sp per skin for the wine.

Rooms are 5 gp per person per night, or 3 gp per person if one shares a room with others. This price includes a house tankard or tallglass and a hot bath. Stabling is 1 gp per person extra, and there is an additional fee if a single person brings more than three beasts. The company of one of the Helm escorts is 12 to 16 gp per night.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Helm has become known as a good place to hire or make contact with warriors. It's also long been rumored to house many hidden caches of found treasure or accumulated pay left behind by those who did not live to return.



## Thunderstone

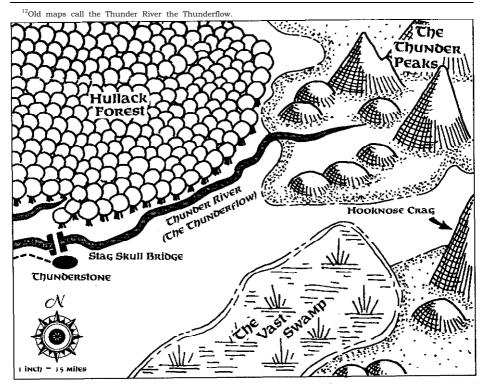
This village of 900-odd folk swells to thrice its usual size in summer, when travel through the High Dale picks up and all manner of folk arrive to hunt or explore the Hullack Forest. (In recent years, tales have arisen of ruins in Hullack's depths, and one has been identified as the legendary Tethgard.) The inns and taverns in this frontier holding change each season, I'm afraid, and so aren't spoken of here.

Thunderstone has a 100-sword Purple Dragon garrison, most of them wild boys who love brawls and monster-slaughtering. The hardened troops are here to stand against the perils of the forest, the nearby Thunder Peaks, and the Vast Swamp. They're under Oversword Faril Laheralson,

who largely ignores the local Crown clerk, Hurm Thiodor. So, watch your step around the Purple Dragons. They *are* the law, and there's no chance to appeal to Suzail.

Prosperous local farmer Del Geery, whose lands adjoin the swamp, is making a name as a hydra hunter by sponsoring expeditions into the swamp. He gleans many useful wares from hydra corpses.

The infamous Stag Skull Bridge spans the Thunder River<sup>12</sup> here, and a permanent Purple Dragon guard on the bridge prevents monster incursions south of the river. Many foresters owe their lives to these soldiers. When pursued by monsters, they collapsed—exhausted—on the bridge as the guard butchered what had been following them. Needless to say, soldiers on this duty are veteran monster slayers.





## Tilverton

This fast-growing town of 12,900 folk is still officially a protectorate of the Forest Kingdom. It is ruled by a Cormyrean noblewoman, Lady Regent Alasalynn Rowanmantle, <sup>13</sup> and a nominally independent, locally elected Council. No one in Faerûn expects to see Cormyr's grip on Tilverton loosen voluntarily, however, and the town has a standing Purple Dragon garrison of 850 swords. They patrol constantly against monsters, brigands, and Zhentish forces.

A typical Purple Dragon patrol consists of 40 seasoned warriors commanded by a veteran officer. All ride medium war horses, wear field plate, and wield lances, maces, long swords, crossbows, and daggers. They are accompanied by one to three war wizards and 10 to 20 archers. The archers practice firing from the saddle and wear leather armor. Each has a long sword, throwing daggers, a long bow, and four quivers that each hold 21 flight arrows. 14 The wizards each carry full spell complements, several scrolls, and as many as a dozen potions of healing in steel vials, but they don't bring their spellbooks out on patrol.

Tilverton's streets are policed by foot patrols of 10 to 20 Purple Dragons armed with slings (instead of bows and lances) and accompanied by one or two mages. No archers accompany these patrols, but 26 are always on call at one of the three city gatehouses.

When Tilverton is threatened by an attack in force, the Council may vote to call out the militia. (The lady regent and Purple

Dragons lack the authority to do so.) Its maximum muster is 470 members, including local adventurers, trappers, and hunters who know the countryside well. The militia is trained in riding and arms.

If all this seems more like an armed camp than a settlement, that's not far wrong. Tilverton is Cormyr's armed bastion in the northeast, shielding the Forest Kingdom against unhampered raids from all sorts of foes. Tilverton is imperiled by the Rogues of Tilverton, a mysterious group known as the Fire Knives, and Zhent agents from within and threatened by orc hordes, marauding monsters, large brigand bands, and Zhentilar armies and hired mercenaries from without.

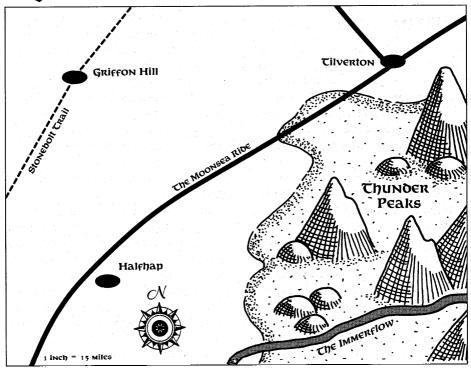
Tilverton's longtime use as a base for those prospecting, logging, hunting, and exploring in the wilderness around continues, and it has always been an important supply center for travelers using Tilver's Gap. Today, Tilverton exports local pottery, gems, furs, and hardy hill horses. The gems are mined in the mountains to the south and (especially) the northwest, and the furs come from beasts trapped in nearby forests. The hill horses are medium war horses bred, trained, and doctored locally. The beasts bred by the ex-Purple Dragon Brieth Tanalar are famous.

Tilverton is a roughly circular walled town with concentric streets that follow the general shape of the city wall. This overall pattern is transected by the Moonsea Ride, which passes through the city east and west. The overall concentric pattern is also broken by the road that becomes the Northride, running out of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Alasalynn Rowanmantle is also a former Purple Dragon officer.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>One quiver is worn, and the other three are attached to the saddles of the horses that the archers ride.





city to the north to Shadow Gap. It meets the Moonsea Ride at a market in the city's center. In the market stands the slender Council Tower, a useful navigational landmark for newcomers. The southwestern third of the city rises above the rest and is separated from it by an internal wall. It occupies a fortified knoll, where the oldest part of town stands, and is accessed from the rest of the town by four entrances: three staircases and a gate.

Not long ago, Tilverton was a small, muddy town of drovers' stockyards and caravan campgrounds around a knoll crowned by a few grand homes, a ruined keep, and the temple of Gond (then called Gharri's House). Old, battered stone houses and many leaning wooden shanties ringed the stockyards.

Then Cormyr came. Faced by
Lashan's expanding empire and increasing orc and Zhentilar raids, Cormyr
moved to secure Tilver's Gap, sending
unrequested aid to the beleaguered town
in the form of a permanent garrison. The
stockyards and grounds were torn down
in favor of new construction and relocated outside a hastily built earthen ridge
and ditch (which is now a stone wall), the
shanties were replaced by stout stone
buildings, and opportunistic Cormyreans
by the hundreds settled in.

Locals who grumbled then about being "stamped under Azoun's boots" have largely fallen silent as the influx of Cormyrean soldiers, merchants, and trade has enriched them and the wall has (at last!) afforded protection against



raiding brigands and monsters. Other citizens, such as Gharri (of Gond), were unhappy under the iron hand of Duke Bhereu, the cousin of Ring Azoun who was sent to govern the town, and left. However, soon after Lashan's fall, Bhereu returned to his normal duties. A restless Suzailan noblewoman was made regent, and some of those who had left returned.

Tilverton has always been a dangerous frontier town of adventurers and ready magic, where the lost hoards of adventurers who went on one expedition too many and never came back have been hidden over the years. Now, it's a bustling town of fast-gathering coins and growing culture. Two prominent mages call Tilverton home: the respected sage Filani of Tantras and Gahlaerd Mossmere, a researcher of new spells who is rumored to aid the Rogues of Tilverton (the local thieves' guild). 15

The Rogues are now the only local outlaw band. The organized Zhentarim and Dragon Cult agents have all been slain or driven out. In recent years, the Rogues did face competition from the sinister Fire Knives, but they have reportedly now all left or been destroyed.

The Knives were linked with the fallen god Moander and dwelt in the town sewers. The Rogues inhabit the sewers now, and their group is believed to number over 70 thieves, aided by local merchants. These merchants escape heavy thefts by providing cooperation and information.

The Rogues have been led by the Grossman family for decades. At present, their leader is the beautiful and wily Lhaerae "the Lithe" Grossman, daughter of the notorious

Artur "the Fat Man" (believed deceased). Lhaerae, who possesses incredible dexterity and acting ability played no open part in the Rogues until recently. Instead she used her beauty and wits to infiltrate the local clergy of Gond and then the Cormyrean garrison to gather information for the Rogues—and to gather the occasional gold coin or magical item for herself.

#### Landmarks

It is unlikely that most visitors to Tilverton will to cross paths with Lhaerae and her ilk, <sup>16</sup> and so they can warily tour this city-to-be. The most interesting part of Tilverton is the Old Town. In Old Town, things aren't as crowded as elsewhere in Tilverton, and new construction is forbidden except by special vote of the Council. Old Town can be reached by climbing the Cormyr Stairs, the Market Stairs, the Tilver Stairs or by entering through the Upper City Gate.

The Cormyr Stairs are located in the west by the Cormyr Gate. They feature a covered landing with an Altar of Shields consecrated as a shrine to the god Helm. The Market Stairs connect directly with the market in the center of Tilverton and have a covered landing containing the Rose Altar, consecrated as a shrine to the god Lathander. The Tilver Stairs on the east 17 carry the Street of the Sorceress into the Old Town. They sport a garden-ringed Green Altar landing that is consecrated to Silvanus.

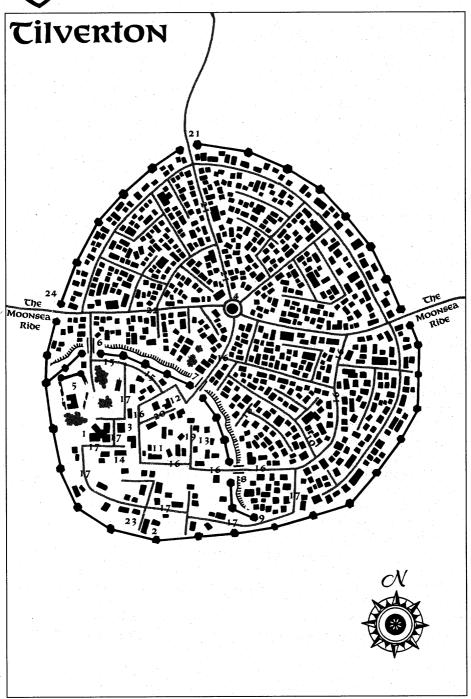
Those who don't like steps or halting to worship can take Gateguard Road off the Street of the Sorceress and journey

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Both of these wizards are detailed in Appendix I of this guidebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>However, one is advised to beware the company of stunningly beautiful women who want to dance at the Flagon Held High—their fingers may be lighter than their feet.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>They are actually located in the southern part of Tilverton but are easternmost of all of these staircases.







## Tilverton Map Key

- The House of the Wonderbringer (temple of Gond Wondermaker; formerly Gharri's House)
- 2. The Windlord's Rest (inn)
- 3. Tower of Wits and Work (Filani the Sage)
- **4.** The market (with the Council Tower at its center)
- 5. Tilver's Palace (ruined keep)
- **6.** Cormyr Stairs and Altar of Shields (shrine to Helm)
- 7. Market Stairs and Rose Altar (shrine to Lathander)
- **8.** Tilver Stairs and Green Altar (shrine to Silvanus)
- **9.** Upper City Gate and the Hand of Chance (shrine to Tymora)

- 10. Dundar's Fine Blades
- 11. Grimwald's Revenge (inn)
- 12. Whispering Witch (inn)
- 13. The Flagon Held High (tavern)
- 14. Jonstyl's Banner (rooming house)
- 15. Knights' Ride
- 16. Street of the Sorceress
- 17. Gateguard Road
- 18. Drakar Lane
- 19. Phorn's Lane
- 20. Haddock Row
- 21. The Northride
- 22. Tanalar's Fine Mounts
- 23. Undreir Facilitations
- 24. The Cormyr Gate

along the city wall, entering the Old Town through Upper City Gate along the south wall of the city. There they can easily push past the Hand of Chance shrine of Tymora if they're not of that faith.

Once inside the gardenlike Old Town, the visitor should look at the ruined Tilver's Palace in the northwestern corner of the heights this district occupies. This former abode of Tilvara remains undisturbed largely because of its Medusa's Garden, a forest of petrified people and monsters that animate like gargoyles to attack any intruders. Weird spell lights drift and flash about inside the ruins, and few who steal in survive to see the outside of the crumbling walls again. One warrior claims to have fought off a watchghost to gain his freedom; he says he also saw beholders or other spherical, many-eyed beings floating about in the depths. Powerful wards prevent all known divination and scrying magics from penetrating the ruin.

The next street east of the ruined keep, reached by taking the short curving avenue of Knights' Ride, is the wide arc of Gateguard Road, which goes around the keep grounds in a sharp dogleg. On the outside (east) of this bend stand the house of Filani the Sage, which she wryly calls the Tower of Wits and Work, and the former site of the Windlord's Rest inn, now a rooming house. In the angle of the dogleg is the House of the Wonderbringer, the town's large temple of Gond (formerly Gharri's House).

Those who follow Gateguard Road along toward the Upper City Gate pass the new Windlord's Rest inn. They should appreciate that in its new location it's about as isolated from the bustle of Tilverton as it can get.

Knights' Ride also links up with the Street of the Sorceress, which runs in a rather tortured loop inside Gateguard Road from the Market Stairs to the Tilver Stairs. The dead-end spur of Phorn's Lane runs off the loop just west of the Tilver Stairs, and on this lane stands the Flagon Held High, Tilverton's only tavern—though there are plenty of drink wagons that travel the streets and alleys each night. Many visitors and citizens alike hasten here every



night for a little roistering and chatter.

Handy to the west, in the angle of the loop of the Street of the Sorceress, is Grimwald's Revenge inn. The Whispering Witch inn stands on Haddock Row, the next side street off the loop before the Knights' Ride intersects it.

### Places of Interest in Tilverton

#### Temples

#### The House of the Wonderbringer

This large temple to the god Gond Wondermaker was formerly known as Gharri's House. It was named after High Priest Gharri, an elder of the town who was later lord regent before his disappearance. It's now led by High Artificer Burlan Almaether. Burlan directs over 40 priests in devising new inventions in worship of the god. One notable recent innovation has been the float valve, wherein rising liquid levels in an enclosure cause a floating item to trigger a switch, typically to shut off the flow of additional water.

This temple attracted many clergy in Gharri's days. He was regarded as an important servant of Gond who had a personal relationship with the god. There is great interest in seeing how Burlan Almaether performs. People are eager to learn if he too will develop a close relationship to Gond, ensuring the temple's greatness and the place of Tilverton in Faerûn.

Shops
Dundar's Fine Blades
Weaponsmith and Toolsmith

Formerly Dundar's Pine Swords, this shop

has recently expanded its wares to include axes, scythes, and saws. Dundar is a warrior of skill who tutors warriors in the use of blades for fees. At such times, his sister Andalara takes over the shop, finishing blades and making scabbards. Andalara is a ranger and Harper who roams the nearby wilderness with six half-elf warriors, collecting prized game and rare woods. Her band also hunts down orcs and other evils that manage to slink past the Purple Dragon patrols.

#### Tanalar's Fine Mounts

Horsebreeder

5 5 5 5 5

This is the office of Brieth Tanalar, the famous local horsebreeder. His horses are bought by folk from as far away as Calimshan to be used as riding horses, for racing, and for stud. He is suspicious of strangers, and the world seems all too full of horse thieves to him. He can afford to charge what he likes and to refuse to sell to folk he doesn't take to. (Merchants should take note.)

#### **Undreir Facilitations**

Second-hand Goods and Fence

3 5 5 5

This discreetly signboarded, narrow shop stands across a side lane from the Windlord's Rest. It is the office of the fat, grasping merchant Phidalpar Undreir, a less-than-scrupulous merchant and dealer in second-hand goods whose shrewd operations have made him very rich. Though not one of the Rogues, Phidalpar employs similar tactics. He has at least a dozen bodyguards





armed with sleep-poisoned darts and daggers in his shop or nearby. He is always willing to fence "awkward" items for adventurers or hire them for this or that "simple, little job."

## Taverns The Flagon Held High

!! 0000

This colorful place is a sort of ongoing festival. Nearly everyone in Tilverton, the high and the low, comes here to buy drinks, laugh at joke-tellers, dancers, and minstrels, and gossip. Professional escorts and thieves work the crowd that spills out into Phorn's Lane every night, and each night amused but watchful Purple Dragons

direct lost, drink-befuddled outlanders back to their inns from the ongoing party.

By tradition, the law looks the other way a lot at the Flagon, and one can see a lot of drunken stunts, merriment, brawling, and amorous flirtation in the crowded but somehow always light-hearted house. Everything is clean and new since the recent rebuilding after a fire, and the cellars boast as good a selection of beers as any tavern of the first rank anywhere in Faerûn. It is not, however, the place for a quiet evening.

#### lnns

Tilverton has over four dozen rooming houses, with more opening every summer. They quickly fill up in the summer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>The cellars are now loaded via their own winchway that takes huge tuns of beer on rails from the end of Drakar Lane, below the knoll, into the side of the knoll beneath the tavern.



with hunters and horse traders. In winter they are empty of all but trappers, adventurers come to try their luck in the Stonelands, and off-duty soldiers who'd like a room for a quiet dice game or two away from watchful officers. Though alley-window kitchens are beginning to spring up, serving soups and hot buns to buyers passing on the street, Tilverton's inns are still its only real restaurants. For this reason and out of familiarity, most short-term visitors to Tilverton still head for one of the three inns in town.

#### Grimwald's Revenge

The Revenge is owned by the Rogues of Tilverton, and it earns them a fairly steady income. They use it for meeting caravan masters willing to bring needed supplies and to take away booty that would be too easily recognized so that it can be sold elsewhere. The Revenge is soundproofed and honeycombed with secret panels and passages, allowing Rogues to easily rob paying guests. Be warned!

The inn is named for the threatened vengeance of the wizard Grimwald on those who transformed an unspecified but beautiful creation of his. The revenge threat was that he would turn his enemies into frogs and seize their worldly goods. The inn's prices are indeed high, and there *are* a lot of frogs hopping about, but as far as I know there are no known instances of guests disappearing.

The inn is run by a jovial, cosh-carrying thief known as Hasantasser Blood-

shoulder. He keeps caged frogs, releasing one to wander whenever the Rogues pull off a major theft. Two frogs with large yellow back-markings have sealed packets of *dust of disappearance* glued to their bellies for use by Rogues in distress.

My investigations confirm local rumors: All newel and banister knobs in the inn twist off in a certain way to reveal handy storage niches. Each of these holds a dagger, a garrote, a black silk face mask and a packet of the vanishing dust used by the Rogues.

The Revenge is connected to the sewers by several concealed ways. I'd hate to be a Purple Dragon attacking the place, and I must confess I was uneasy just staying there as a guest. Stay at Grimwald's Revenge at your own risk.

#### The Whispering Witch

SSS BBB

This is a dark, cozy establishment where unexplained sounds are often heard and spells go off behind closed doors. The Witch is owned and run by two sisters who seem at first sinister enough, but I can be the first to tell the world that they're not Rogues or crazed cultists, but undercover Harpers!<sup>19</sup>

Aluana and Jhansabella Nithrin are both mages. Their cook, the balding and bearded Alstigar the Silent, is secretly a bard and so is their stablemaster, Kheldrar Ghaudelar.

#### The Windlord's Rest

!!! 1844

This formerly small, cozy inn has moved

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Elminster: My, ye're helpful. Why not reveal the true names and locations of the Seven Lost Heirs while ye're at it? It'll cut down on the civil wars and the rush of adventurers deluded into rightful claims on thrones. I suppose saving all those lives would be too helpful by half. Aye, everyone on staff at the Whispering Witch is a Harper.





to a labyrinth of interconnected former homes and shops linked by drafty, uneven-floored passages. It is now located hard by the town wall in the southernmost spot in Tilverton. Though even the staff sometimes get lost in this dimly lit warren, the Rest is still warmed by the wise and kindly nature of its owner, the retired illusionist Thungor Triblane, a gnome of balding head but a magnificent beard and bristling brows.

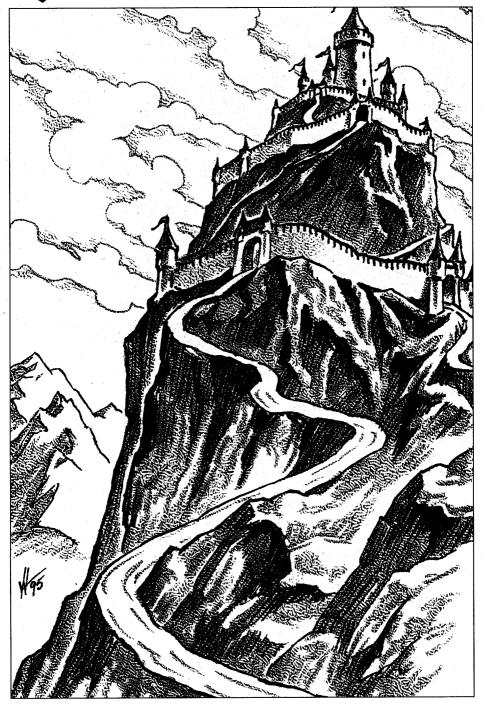
Thungor believes in adopting guests as unofficial family members, dispensing advice, directions, slippers for damp feet, scoldings, and pocket money as if patrons were his errant children. This irritates a few folk beyond belief, but

most love it and become loyal clients who send deposits ahead to secure a favored chamber or suite and even pay extra when Thungor hands them their bill after a stay.

Thungor had to move the Rest largely because the old place was too small to squeeze in half the returning guests who wanted to stay there. The old location is now a rooming house, Jonstyl's Banner, run by a crippled dwarven ex-adventuress. Thungor still pays Jonstyl to give parlor space to a pair of shy gnome runners. Their only task is to lead folk who come to Jonstyl's door expecting to see Thungor instead to the new Windlord's Rest.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Jonstyl wants readers to know that she caters especially to adventurers. She offers discreet lodging and services, can obtain *potions of healing* for injured guests, and can provide disguises, mounts, and meals swiftly and at all hours.







# The West Reaches



his mountainous backside of the realm of Cormyr (as a long-ago sage called it), is often neglected by Cormyrean and traveler

alike. The visitor who doesn't venture to the west reaches of the realm misses much of the beauty of the Forest Kingdom. Its mist-shrouded upland meadows and pine forests are exquisite, if often deadly. Despite Cormyr's ever-growing strength, this is still monster country.

Mapping the Stonelands and the Storm Horns provides a few trusted adventuring bands with a steady source of income. However, many valleys and high meadows in the Storm Horns remain unexplored or mapped today despite the diligent work of scrying war wizards and hired adventurers sent to follow up on what a mage has seen from afar.

## Waystops and Holdings

Settlements in the Storm Horns are scarce. Each can be crucial to travelers' survival, especially if they're being trailed by brigands or orc bands, but that doesn't make these places wildly entertaining to visit or worthy of detailed entries in this book. A few of these places are vital waystops, but they still aren't any prettier or better equipped than they absolutely need be. Such places are mentioned briefly in this section for the reference of travelers trying to stay alive:

## Eagle Peak

This fortified trade town offers a base for merchants and adventurers bold enough to enter the Farsea Marshes or Tunland. The more prudent stay here, and the Marsh Drovers of the Farsea Marshes come to them, selling their Death Cheese (made from catoblepas milk) in the marketplace. One-pound blocks cost 2 gp each in the Peak, rather than the 5 gp that Aurora's Catalogue Shops and most other outlets typically charge. Less wellknown, but even tastier, is the delicately herbed Deadeye Butter, also made from catoblepas milk. The market is also notable for the hill sheep, mountain goats, and furs to be had here, as well as the usual assortment of tools, hardware, and furniture brought by caravans.

Eagle Peak is home to a Purple Dragon garrison of 600, here "bored in the back of beyond" as their mournful trail song puts it. They protect Cormyr's backside from Zhent, Tun brigand, and orc horde attacks.

It's a bleak place, kept all of stone, tile, and slate to prevent fires from being started by incendiary missiles in a siege and to aid in the resetting of the many warning wards everywhere when they are triggered. The Peak's best-kept secrets are its tiny walled gardens, where residents nurture their own small slices of verdant woodland. Typically these plots hold a tiny pump-fed pool surrounded by ferns, mosses, shrubs, and a few trees carefully pruned and tied to grow bushy and



stunted, curving over to roof in the garden with their boughs. Residents use these private bowers to dine in, court in, and to entertain friends or honored guests.

The Peak doesn't have inns or taverns as they're known elsewhere in Cormyr but rather hot food shops, stables, and rooming houses. The traveler must use these services separately. The Eagle Peak stables guarantee mounts. If mounts are lost or stolen while in their care, they give the owners replacements that are as good or better than what was lost as can be managed.

## High Horn

High Horn is the name of the highest point in the Dragonjaw line of peaks and of the magnificent castle that surmounts it, guarding the pass through the Storm Horns that is Cormyr's western gate. Not as crucial to the survival of the realm as it once it was, High Horn is still the mightiest castle in the Forest Kingdom.

The fortress now occupies the entire peak, which has been sculpted into a formidable barrier. The castle is ringed by a moat and a wall, around which is the inner ward of barracks, granaries, and deep wells. The inner ward has its own moat and ring wall, and around this is the outer ward, with its stables, armories, smithies, and storerooms. The outer ward has, in turn, its own moat and wall. The wall has three gates, all leading down to the main road, a thousand feet below, by means of their own trails. Outside the outer ward's wall are small fortified guesthouses for the use of travelers who need the rather forbidding protection of the Horn for a night's stopover. These guesthouses are staffed by rather gruff Purple Dragons.

Few outlanders or Cormyreans have seen the magnificent banquet hall in the heart of the castle. The lord high commander of High Horn orders most of his "guests" to the dungeons deep inside High Horn to await the pleasure of expert war wizard interrogators. Only war wizards and Purple Dragons are normally allowed inside the Horn itself.

#### Huthduth

The small keep of Huthduth lies in a small wooded valley east of the road where the High Road breaks out of heavy mountains and turns southwest amid rolling hills two day's ride west of High Horn. Home to a monastic community that worships Chauntea, Huthduth is known for its warrior-priests and its generous attitude toward food. Any travelers are given free lodging for up to three nights and as much food as they want from the rather meager local menu of mutton, lamb, mountain berries, parsnip wine, parsnips, and alpine sprouts. The priests like to hear news of the world around, and in return they speak of the abandoned mines, old dwarf holds, ruins, monster lairs, and treasure sites they know of in the surrounding mountains. Huthduth is named for its founder, a simple and long-dead monk whose phantom still appears at some rituals to Chauntea, watching and smiling.

The priests defend their flocks of sheep, which are allowed to wander, through the use of spells that allow them to scry particular sheep from afar and teleport themselves in groups to the location of any particular sheep. Orcs, monsters, or hungry adventurers thinking to strike down a sheep suddenly find themselves sur-



rounded and under attack by a grim band of mace-wielding priests in chain mail. The penalty for killing a temple sheep is a forfeit of 1,000 gp. Those without funds enough to pay must give up items of the priests' choice and/or perform a service. The required service is typically to slay particular local menace the priests haven't gotten around to dealing with yet.

There's some sort of secret about Huthduth, too, that I was unable to learn. A feeling of slumbering power permeates the old keep, and I saw at least one spell of awesome power hurled, which tells me that at least one archmage resides there. Perhaps the Crown of Cormyr keeps some secret weapon, heir, or force here—or perhaps it's something Suzail knows nothing about. I await news from some diligent reader of his or her discovery of what's hidden in the House of Huthduth. In a future edition of this guidebook, perhaps, I'll be able to set down the truth about Huthduth.

### Old Axe

South of Skull Crag, the High Road passes close to a sharply upthrust peak. This is the Old Axe, and in its shadow is lies a mining hamlet of the same name. The buildings the traveler can see from the road are a ghost town, abandoned after repeated orc and hobgoblin raids. The few folk who still dwell here inhabit a few caves in Old Axe itself that have been walled off to make them secure against surface intruders. The folk who dwell here were reluctant to reveal their true numbers—how few they really were, actually, as only about 70 or 80, as far as I could make out, still live here. The mines here go deep into the heart of

the earth. More than once the miners have broken through into tunnels and caverns of the Underdark and had to battle the monsters of the dark places.

Still the dogged persist, bolstered by no less than seven war wizards provided by Vangerdahast, along with hired adventuring bands. The iron in these mines is unusually pure and is vital to Cormyr's army. This has long been so and is how the mountain got its name. From time to time the miners find curious veins of hardened clay that contain suspended gravel and rubies. Some of these stones have been as large as a hen's egg, but most are of fingernail size or smaller. Merchants with goods to sell will find the miners wonderful buyers, and travelers with mining skills or swords to hire out, of course, may find work in Old Axe-dangerous work.

The delvers of Old Axe usually grow rich enough to retire elsewhere while they're still young enough to enjoy it, though some come to love the place and stay on. Every year, the miners set up stalls in Suzail offering maidens thousands in gold if they'll come to Old Axe to be a "miner's maid" (a romantic companion) for a year. They entertain few respondents, and fewer still stay the course.

However, that may be changing. There's word that a lady, Alatha "Firehair" Bloodil, has risen to lead the miners. She is going to come to Suzail herself to recruit women so that her community can grow in size and not dwindle to a war wizard-guarded outpost. Whatever the future of Old Axe may be, it has little to offer the traveler but a sheltered camp, pure drinking water, and whatever aid a war wizard feels like giving.





## Skull Crag

This large fortified village of over 2,000 folk fills a flat-topped spur of Old Blind Mage Mountain and overlooks the High Road, commanding a view up and down it for miles. This location makes Skull Crag an ideal military base. Over half the Crag's folk are Purple Dragons who patrol up and down the road and in the skies over the Storm Horns. To patrol the air, they use a flight of hippogriffs and the aid of a tower staffed by no less than nine war wizards.

All this military might protects anyone else settling here. Shepherds and miners have both come in force, claiming the rolling fields north of the village and Old Blind Mage Mountain, respectively. They feed local mouths with meat to spare and

delve for iron, nickel, and copper. Excess meat is preserved by magic and sold to passing merchants. Local miners speak of a lost mine in the peaks east of Old Blind Mage, but no one in living memory has found it. Expeditions that set out to search for it are growing increasingly dangerous as peryton and other predators move into the area, attracted by the continued presence of numerous sheep and humans.

Adventurers are being hired to scour the mountain heights of monsters and go seeking lost mines and caverns. There's even local talk of using titanic magic to blast a pass east right through the Storm Horns into Cormyr's heartlands through the low mountains south of the Crag. This plan gives many Purple Dragon officers fits whenever they hear of it.



## Greatgaunt

Named for the old and respected Cormyrean military family who founded it, this fortified town of 4,000-odd folk stands on a rocky plateau overlooking the High Road. It lies on the road's east side just where the road, running north from the Bridge of Fallen Men, first enters the foothills of the Storm Horns.

Greatgaunt is notable as the site of the Moon Dance, a monthly gathering of devotees of Selûne that has grown into something of a trade fair and as the home of Tansard Famwell, the Singer Among the Harpies, a youth so skilled that he can offset harpy charming by his singing. An accomplished mimic, Tansard is available for hire as an impersonator. He once played the part of Vangerdahast so well that he almost plunged the war wizards into a scandal. He's been warned not to repeat similar performances on pain of death for treason or having his vocal cords cut, but there are rumors. . . .

#### Landmarks

Greatgaunt is dominated by Greatgard, the huge castle that stands at the south end of the walled city, frowning down from the full height of the ramparts and the cliff below at the road. Its walls are crowded with espringales, catapults, and trebuchets of huge size that can hurl loads of rock for almost a mile along the road south of the town. There are even said to be bombards behind some of the downsloping fire chutes that can rake the ground below the walls. More importantly the town has a long and proud tradition of superb archery, and onduty archers practice shooting at mark

poles outside the walls for several hours a day. Defenders on the town walls have been known to shoot attackers who're so distant that they're almost at the limits of human sight out of their saddles. Greatgard has held off orc hordes and even Zhentilar attacks. It is growing in importance as a military base as the Tun bandits grow more powerful and Cormyr looks to expand into Tunland.

The Greatgaunt family home, Greatgates Manor, stands at the north end of the plateau above a ravine so broken and jagged that no attacking force has ever come from that direction. This small castle boasts magnificent windows on its inner walls that look down into a courtyard. These stained glass windows display the family arms, a righthand gauntlet clutching a dove in its fist. The courtyard holds a fountain enchanted with spells that heat the water to provide hot water year-round and prevent its freezing in winter. It's known as the Steaming Fountain due to the vapor that streams from it when the air around is cold. Citizens of the town can come to it to draw water at anytime, since the pumps for the deep wells in the market at the other end of town often freeze up in harsh winter storms.

Space within the walls is at a premium, and the visitor won't find many trees. The town is a succession of tall, slate-roofed houses crowded together, wall touching wall, along narrow cobbled lanes. Bronze handrails, green with age, are set into the walls everywhere to allow walkers to use the sloping parts of a street in icy weather. And yes, the children of the town delight in sliding down icy streets at high speed on their backsides or borrowed shields until they crash into a prepositioned bale of straw—or a wall, barrel, or cart.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Greatgaunts are battlemasters and garrison commanders in the Purple Dragons today.



Facing Greatgard across the large open marketplace<sup>2</sup> at the south end of town is Moonrise House, the local temple to Selûne. Founded only about a decade ago by a charismatic priestess, the beautiful Marijel Dhallard (formerly of Selgaunt), the temple is fast growing into a force for growth and harmonious living with the cycles of nature in Greatgaunt. The temple also lends support to those who either must or choose to work at night, sleeping the day through. As devout worshipers love the moonlight best, they now make up a substantial portion of the Night Watch<sup>3</sup> and the Purple Dragons serving on dark-duty shifts.

Selûnians have festivals at every full moon and solemn sacrificial rituals where silver statuettes are melted in flames at every moondark (new moon). They believe in planting<sup>4</sup> and beginning craftwork as the moon waxes, and in cleaning, cooking, and doing chores as the moon wanes. This makes Greatgaunt interesting to visit. Many folk are asleep no matter what the time of day is, the streets are never crowded, and buildings have heavily padded shutters and thick walls to deaden sound, making it a peaceful place for travelers used to the noise and crowding of most walled towns.

# Places of Interest in Greatgaunt Shops The Shield of Glory Armor and Weaponry

This well-stocked armor and weaponry shop is just the place for an adventurers or armsmasters to outfit themselves in everything from leather underbreeches to full tourney coat-of-plate. The only arrows in the place are a few incredibly expensive enchanted arrows of slaying. (Other smaller shops in town deal exclusively in bows and arrows.) Almost every other personal weapon or accouterment can be had here. Lances are surprisingly good sellers, and the proprietor, the dwarf armorer Narthalin, is especially proud of his belts of six matched-balance everbright daggers (20 gp a set, firm).

Local legend insists that the cellar caverns of the Shield have been used for centuries by the Greatgaunt family as an armory. The caverns are said to include an access *gate* to an ancient refuge created for the Greatgaunts long ago by the mysterious Sword Heralds.<sup>5</sup> Narthalin refuses to discuss this. It is supposedly also reachable via a certain closet in Greatgard and a hidden passage in Greatgates Manor.

# TAVERNS The Twelve Dancing Knights

This quaint old tayern's name

This quaint old tavern's name is derived from some lines about it in a ballad by the long-dead bard Shalivarr of Iriaebor. The couplet has been ornately carved on a large plaque over the door:

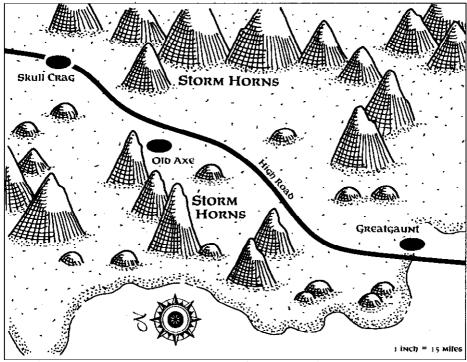
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>It's a livestock fair. Drovers are allowed to camp with their beasts in the center, among much dung and straw, so only a single ring of booths is allowed in the market.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The Night Watch is Greatgaunt's shop and market police force, active only from dusk to dawn. Purple Dragons police the town during the day.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Usually in the small roadside fields below the town.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See Appendix II of this guidebook for more about the Sword Heralds and their creations.





O, twelve bold knights here made merrie, And when they left, a-dancing they be.

Shalivarr's song refers to some rowdy nobles of early Cormyr. It's easy to see what they liked about the smoky, warm-hearthed taproom within: plentiful drink served promptly and carefully by handsome men and comely maids, cozy booths adorned with old weapons and battle regalia of the realm, and platters of free hand food on every board. The hand food treats served here include grapes, butter biscuits, wedges of strong cheese, and slices of cold spiced sausage. The Twelve Dancing Knights is a thoroughly enjoyable, if simple, thirst-slaying house and is highly recommended.

Several old, retired miners and soldiers spend days gaming here by the fire. They love to tell stories of mountain lore, dragon treasure, and past battles to those who'll buy them a pint of bitter black.

## INNS The Old Bucket Drops



The Old Bucket is not a bad inn, but it is a trifle overpriced. No food is served, and the only drink to be had is water from the ewers of wash water in each room. However, for 3 sp you can have a hot bath in your room in a copper carry-tub that has been filled by a line of servants dumping steaming kettles.



# Hornshield

This isolated, formidable mountain keep was once the fortress home of the noble family whose name it bears. That family died out some 70-odd winters ago, and since then it has housed a collection of artisans. These artisans are the descendants of workers who served the last, eccentric Duke Hornshield.

Hornshield Keep is a huge building that almost fills a narrow cleft high up on Mount Shalandragar. It can be reached only by crossing a perilous, windswept bridge linking it with one shoulder of the mountain. This 90-foot-long span is lit by rows of flickering lanterns at night and is watched at all times by archers. It is also defended by a ballista aimed to hurl heavy javelins the length of its run. Attackers must be able to leap very high or hang from the underside of the bridge and get back up again to avoid it, and a 200-foot drop awaits them if they fall!<sup>7</sup>

In times of trouble, defenders crank massive stone support rams back into the keep walls, and the hinged bridge falls away from the keep to slam against the shoulder of Eastmount (the eastern flank of Mount Shalandragar), hurling anyone on it down into the cleft. When it is safe to do so, the bridge is winched up into place again by means of massive steel chains. These afford away into the fortress too, but flaming oil or *heat metal* spells can render them perilous in the extreme.

Today Hornshield is a small but thriving community of brasscasters, locksmiths, glassblowers and glasscutters, chainmakers, and armorers. The pride and specialty of the glassworkers is preframed windows. These are sold, frame and all, in the cities of Cormyr and nearby coastal cities around the Lake of Dragons. Much of these craftsfolk's raw materials and finished produce are whisked to and from certain warehouses in Suzail by a small staff of well-paid wizards. At least one of these mages is always a spy for the war wizards. She or he is stationed here to ensure that no enemy of the realm takes control of, or is illicitly outfitted by, the armorers here.

All of the families of Hornshield dwell in various rooms of the labyrinthine keep, governing themselves through a collective council of elders. They devote their attentions to security, work, and profit. Rooftop glass-roofed food gardens are a current interest and are being constructed to lessen the community's dependence on outside food. A spring in the depths of the keep provides drinking water, and the folk of Hornshield use it to brew a strange-tasting, potent mushroom mash ale that is very much an acquired taste. At first sip, it seems like one is drinking furry, moldy water!

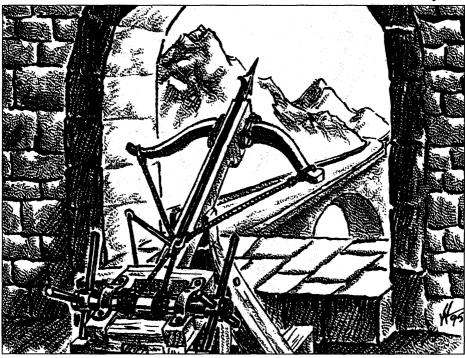
Prominent families in Hornshield include the Nelduks, the Seshores, and the Tilthar. Hornshielders have little use for dreamers and idlers. They take great pride

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>King Rhigaerd II awarded the family a dukedom in recognition of its valiant efforts in driving out brigands from the surrounding peaks.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Either of these feats requires a successful Dexterity ability check to perform and a successful Strength ability check to hang on or land properly. (Unless one is a thief, in which case a climb walls roll can be substituted for the Strength check.) Failure in either one means the character is caught on the bridge and struck by a javelin that inflicts 5d6 points of damage. Failure in both rolls means a fall from the bridge onto the rocks far below

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>A player character clinging to the bridge would be battered for 4d4 points of impact damage, and forced to make both a Strength ability check and a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If either roll fails, the character is smashed free of the bridge to fall into the cleft below.





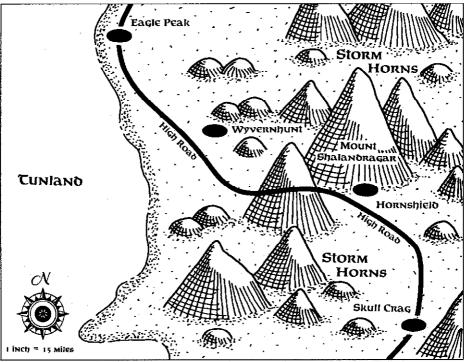
in their own efficiency and output, referring to themselves as "the most truly useful settlement in all Cormyr." The traveler who knows that the few folk of Cormyr who've heard of the place regard it as a fortress full of crazies had best keep quiet about this. Visitors who wear out their welcome have been thrust out onto the mountainside with just what they're wearing and have had the keep shut against them!

Visitors aren't overly welcome in Hornshield anyway, though anyone with ideas to offer or unusual tools or items to sell is treated with courteous interest. All intruders are kept under escort and not encouraged to stay very long. The Hornshield elders greatly fear that an avaricious wizard—perhaps a Zhentarim—will show up one day to enslave them all. To deal with this anticipated threat, they keep a war wizard on

hand equipped with a *crystal ball* for quick communication with the Palace of the Purple Dragon in Suzail and a plentiful supply of *arrows of wizard slaying* for their archers.

A now-dead mage of Hornshield, Aumrathar Uernhands, was one of the few wizards of Faerûn to ever master the secrets of making arrows of beholder slating, and the community has over 40 of these precious shafts left, carefully hidden away. (It should be noted that preservative enchantments laid on the stones of the keep long ago make detection and directional magic almost useless inside the place.) Word of the wizard's deeds spread around the Dragonreach a generation ago, and the community has grown used to visits from adventurers eager to buy these arrows. Hornshielders are mindful that some of these shafts may one day be needed for





their own defense and that, with Aumrathar dead, there'll be no more. Accordingly, they'll sell only two at most to any group per visit—and the price won't fall below 7,500 gp for the first arrow and 9,000 gp for the second. They have no pressing need for the money, but a few arrows well sold can cover the monetary needs of Hornshield for three seasons or more, so they'll bargain with patient inflexibility.

Hornshield itself is an echoing cacophony of pounding hammers, hissing and bubbling furnaces and vats, and scurrying workers. The smokes of their labors often stream up out of the cleft so thickly as to give it almost the appearance of a volcano from afar. Indeed, some caravan workers and shepherds call Shalandragar the Smoking Mountain. There aren't any shops

in Horn Shield per se. The visitor interested in purchasing something simply goes to the maker and dickers. Delivery to any Suzailan address can be provided.

## Places of Interest in Hornshield Restaurant/Tavern The Weary Worker

!!!! DOO

Patrons who avoid the aforementioned mushroom mash ale served in the Weary Worker will otherwise find the fare here simple but beautifully prepared. The damp chill that pervades much of Hornshield is offset in this establishment by a variety of thick, hot soups, stews, and sauces.



# Wyvernhunt

This former brigand's stronghold was one of the bases used by the usurper Gondegal, but these days the Purple Dragons don't bother to garrison the crumbling ramparts. Often used as a shelter by travelers, Wyvernhunt Keep is little more than a single large room built onto a rocky slope with its roof and the walls on the downward sides forming a high-walled platform from which defenders can look or fire weapons out over the ground below.

The hamlet of Wyvernhunt consists of about 16 families of shepherds who dwell in tiny stone cottages tucked here and there on the boulder-strewn high meadow slopes. Some of these "cottages" are just walled-over caves. The shepherds wander with their flocks until merchants show up in Deepwell Market (named for its well, which gives clear, fresh-tasting water) and ring the Buyers' Bell, signifying that they want to buy. Then the villagers engage in a footrace down from their various abodes. At the market, they vie with each other to sell their animals, raw wool they've shorn, or even a little goat's milk cheese. (Many of them keep a few goats for making cheese.)

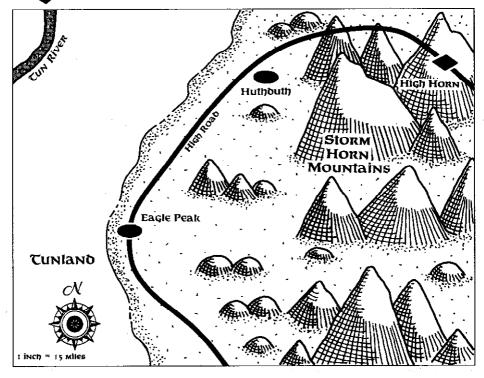
Wyvernhunt is notable to the traveler only because of its well, the shelter the grandly overnamed keep affords, and for Spear Rock, a rough but famous shrine to Tempus. It is said by the faithful that the war god listens diligently to prayers offered at the gigantic Shield Stone, a boulder that resembles an altar table and lies in the shadow of Spear Rock itself. It is attested truth that several devotees of



Tempus who prayed at Spear Rock before battles were aided in the fray by lightning bolts smiting their foes—bolts that fell from blue, cloudless skies.

Lone warriors show up at the shrine all year round, and priests of Tempus regularly come to cleanse the place and remove offerings left there. Spear Rock can be clearly seen from the hamlet. It stands on a knoll several fields above the well, and a strong archer at Spear Rock could send arrows down into the market. Local legend insists that archers faithful to Tempus can't miss with bolts or arrows fired from the shrine, so it's an ideal place for a beleaguered archer to make such a stand. Such defenses have occurred at least twice in the past, notably when the outlaw Saeragus the Sly felled an entire patrol of Purple Dragons





with his archery after they'd cornered him at Spear Rock.<sup>9</sup>

There are a number of copper mines in the mountains high above Wyvernhunt. The monster aeries that gave the place its name are thankfully rare now, making the mines much safer to work. Local legends speak of a brigand, Black Shaernauba, who is apparently a werewyvern: If she tries to rob someone on the road and the confrontation goes against her, she takes wyvern shape and flies away! She's reputed to dwell in a cave crammed with coins and gems and

to keep handsome male victims there as captives.

Black Shaernauba is said to have slain Purple Dragons who tried to establish a waypost in Wyvernhunt and folk who tried to build inns there so often that both projects were abandoned. This seems to be more wishful thinking than truth. If the Crown of Cormyr wanted a guardpost in Wyvernhunt, it'd take a lot more than one werewyvern to prevail against the war wizards who could be called upon to make the post a reality.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Elminster says this claim is only somewhat exaggerated. From his comments, it seems that all missile weapons launched from within 40 feet of the Shield Stone receive a +5 bonus to their attack rolls.

He also noted another manifestation of the power of Tempus that has been reliably reported on several recent occasions: The voice of the war god speaks from the Shield Stone to tell a devout supplicant who prays to Tempus in a manner pleasing to the deity the location of a named foe. On most occasions, Tempus gives a one-word reply: "Suzail" or "Sembia," but the god has been known to be as specific as "north of the Hill of Lost Souls."



# Appendix 1: Folk of Cormyr



he folk listed herein are by no means the only important people in Cormyr. Indeed, Volo avoided the noble houses and the folk

of the Royal Court as much as he could and, as is his wont, concentrated on individuals of interest to the traveler, rogue, and adventurer. Only a few of those people gave him the time of day, so what appears here can be considered a very incomplete roster of names that matter in Cormyr today.

With Elminster's aid, probable levels and other game statistics of these beings have been estimated, and additional personal details added. As this information is fresh, statistics published here take precedence over earlier published information. People are listed alphabetically by their first names because many folk in Cormyr lack surnames. Nicknames and titles are ignored when considering how to alphabetize a name.

AMBRATHA SUREN (CG hf F6; STR 19). Ambratha is a gruff, no-nonsense, pipe-smoking farmer of Aunkspear who's considered the best breeder of gray geese in all Suzail. She hasn't much time for insolent or foolish folk. She has been known to pick up raiding orcs and annoying humans alike and hurl them either into her duck pond or against the nearest of the standing stones she uses as fence supports, depending on whether she wants them ever to be able to bother her again.

**ARGUL MARAMMAS** (LN hm M13). Argûl is a resident of Suzail engaged in research on the planes of existence and in spells of personal protection and concealment. To fund these very expensive pursuits and his love of exotic seafood dishes, rich sauces and fine wine, he makes scrolls containing from one to

three wizard spells to order. He charges an average of 5,000 gp per spell.

Argul is always eager to interview beings who've recently returned from other planes. He's a soft-spoken, condescending man who views most folk—warriors in particular—as destructive fools, cattle who must be endured by those who are more intelligent, such as himself. He is disgusted by mages such as the Red Wizards of Thay, who waste their energies trying to slay and dominate.

ASHEYRON THE LEARNED (LN hm F1; Sage fields: monsters). The owner of the Elfskull Inn in Arabel, Asheyron the Learned is Faerun's foremost expert on gorgons as well as being a sage learned about many monsters. For example, he can lecture on what faiths various monster races follow and what rituals such worship entails. Asheyron is the owner of an amulet of protection from petrification, but he is believed by many to be immune to gorgon breath effects because he's survived many exposures unscathed—some of them, observers insist, on occasions when he'd forgotten to wear his amulet.

Asheyron briefly adopted the name of his older brother, "Asgetrion," in a vain attempt to inherit a goodly sum under the terms of an uncle's will. However, the gems his Uncle Orund had set aside couldn't be found after his death, so Asheyron has reverted to his own name.

Over recent years, Asheyron's views have drifted increasingly toward viewing the enforcement of rigid law and order as providing the best conditions for civilized living. This has resulted in his drafting many regulations, which he's offered to Myrmeen Lhal for adoption into law. Though she's accepted few of them, the two respect each other and often meet to discuss difficult cases of justice, a practice that the aging sage finds very flattering.

Asheyron's alignment has altered along with his views (from neutral good to lawful neutral), but he still refuses to allow anyone but agents of the Crown to use any of his large collection of scrolls of protection from petrification. He has no interest, he often says, in seeing every gorgon in Faerûn slain, rendering him an expert on nothing!

BAERELUS THE BOLD (N satyr m; Sage fields: flora and fauna of the King's Forest). Baerelus is Knightswood's expert on the lore and fauna of the King's Forest. He serves as a sympathetic ear and a source of wise advice to many young Cormyreans and is beloved by many people. In turn, he enjoys



this work and never dreams of accepting any recompense for it. From the confessions of the young he learns a great deal of the mood of the realm and of what's going on. King Azoun has learned to stop by with a sumptuous meal to learn the former from the satyr. Baerelus won't reveal confidences but can give the king a shrewd picture of the way folk are thinking and feeling in Cormyr. Azoun is wise enough to heed what Baerelus tells him.

BARANDOS HAWKLIN (LN hm F7). As the head of the Hawklin noble family, Barandos is a popular man in Suzail. Under his direction, the Hawklin clan has prospered from shrewd investments in Suzailan trade, from adventuring, and from sponsoring the adventures of others in the east reaches of Cormyr. Barandos himself has keen wits and debonair good looks, an easy way with charming ladies of both high and low rank, and unflinching standards of personal honesty and fair dealing. As this integrity has become known, his influence and importance has grown, as has the wealth of his family, due to investors flocking to work with him.

Coins seem to multiply in his grasp, yet he's never forgotten that adventuring made his fortune in the first place, and he remains the foremost patron of adventurers. His success has even spurred other noble families to quietly take chartered adventuring bands into their own employ. "The Hawk of Hawklin" is perhaps the most important man in Suzail who has no post at Court, does not head a senior noble house, and has no royal title.

**Baskor Tranth** (NG hm M9). Baskor is a hard-drinking, surly mage who dwells in Suzail, haunted by horrific memories of escaping Myth Drannor alone. All of his companions in the adventuring band from Priapurl known as the Brightstar were slaughtered.

Baskor is fascinated by tales of adventure, but he is petrified at the thought of ever adventuring again himself. He does aid novice adventurers with training and in-town spellcasting if they pay him up front.

His fear drives him to try anything to get his hands on new combat spells. The war wizards know this and are watching him. They've heard he's gotten visiting mages drunk on several occasions and kept them that way for prolonged periods while he copies all he can from their spellbooks. He doesn't attempt such tactics against formidable foes, opting instead to trade for spells. From similar swaps he has built up an extensive collection of spell scrolls.

**BLENTRA** WHAELBUCKLER (CG hf F9; Sra 18/04). This well-loved restaurant-owner of Marsember is a Harper agent. Though most Marsembians don't know of her allegiance to Those Who Harp, they have heard that she's a scourge of evil who enjoys pouncing on pirates, slavers, and thieves by night.

A fearless giant of a woman, Blentra is expert at throwing things and has been known to fell pirates using hurled stools from clear across a wide channel of water in the dark. She swims powerfully, though she grunts, spits water, and pants as if she's dying. She once lifted a smashed cart and the dead horse draped over it to drag with one hand a pinned fellow citizen out from under it.

Blentra loves to be a part of adventures and frolics. She hates to be left in the dark and not told of everything interesting that's going on in Marsember.

**DELTHRIN THE DEADMASTER** (NE hm M12). This reclusive necromancer of Marsember's time is devoted to endless experiments with the drowned dead. He's reportedly devised a large, predatory sharklike aquatic undead creature that is made of the cobbled-together body parts of many beings and sports multiple jawed heads, grasping claws, and massive main jaws.

Delthrin gained notoriety when he defended Marsember against a pirate raid by raising a legion of sea zombies, ju-ju zombies, bone sharks, skeletons, and lacedons who swarmed aboard no less then six pirate vessels and tore the ships apart along with their crews!

Draguth Endroun (N hm D12 of Silvanus). Draguth is the leader of the Knightswood Nine druidic circle. A white-haired, elderly man who likes to seem mysterious and act behind the scenes as much as possible, Draguth is reclusive, short-tempered, stubborn, and opinionated. At any time, he's apt to be fighting with at least half of the druids in the circle. He retains leadership of the circle for two reasons. First, even the other druids think he's more powerful than he really is, thanks to his manner. Most importantly, he has a brilliant understanding of how things grow and what should be planted to flourish and balance in any given area of the King's Forest. The lush vicinity of Knightswood is a testimony to his skills.

Draguth defends himself with a staff of the wood-lands and a unique immunity to dryad charms. This immunity has allowed him to befriend the tree folk and perfect a dimension door ability that can take him from one particular tree to another many times in a day.

Draguth won't willingly leave the King's Forest, but he is apt to show up unheralded to confront anyone cutting wood, lighting a fire, or simply journeying through the forest depths to see what they're up to. Through the years, he has rescued several exhausted, wounded adventuring bands from woodland predators.

**DUNMAN KIRIAG** (NG hm F5; STR 17). Dunman runs the Lonesome Tankard Inn in Eveningstar. Due to long practice, Dunman is +3 to his attack roll inside the inn with any dagger. He carries a dagger +4



sheathed in one sleeve. Dunman has two secret sides: He's both a Crown agent and a Harper.

A psionic wild talent, Dunman has the abilities of danger sense and mind bar and also possesses a near-perfect memory. He remembers faces half-glimpsed two decades before or now disguised. A man of great, gruff discretion, he uses few words but is always kind and helpful. Many exhausted guests have been astonished to find him removing their boots and washing their feet with hot salts when they've slumped into a chair with a tankard after a long day of walking.

Once a Sembian noble's bodyguard and later a Purple Dragon officer, Dunman is far older than he appears. He gained eight potions of longevity while looting a dragon's hoard about 160 winters ago, and he has used four of them. He was then a member of the Six Splendid Swords adventuring band, and he came to love one of his companions, the gold elf warrior-mage Deularla "Hightower" Ithruen of Evermeet.

At first haughty, she slowly came to love him, and she joined with him in marriage shortly before another dragon devoured most of the company and reduced her to a scorched ruin. She spent her last strength in a mighty magic that sent her essence into Dunman. She now lives on inside him, a merry companion who warns him of danger, recalls things for him, and dispenses wry advice. With her presence, Dunman has no need of any other intimacy and has never remarried.

On occasion, Deularla speaks to others through Dunman's lips. She can speak and be aware while he sleeps or is unconscious. She retains some minor magical powers. She can send a silent, shadowy image of herself some 400 yards distant (which she's used to warn Tessaril of orc and brigand attacks), observe as if by a wizard eye for the same range, and cure disease and neutralize poison in Dunman—and in others using his touch.

ELESTRA BLAEBUR (CG hf B6). A popular party singer and dancer in Marsember, Elestra is also a Harper agent. When not performing at the Masked Merfolk nightclub, Elestra secretly carries messages for war wizards and the Harpers. (Every third minstrel or so who comes to play at the Masked Merfolk is a Harper agent or contact, so she can easily get and receive small items and information.) She also carries other messages on the side for well-paying patrons of the Merfolk—in particular, outlaws or feuding pirates who must remain hidden for their own safety—and makes a very good living at it. Her specialty is delivering beside messages at midnight to unsuspecting, well-guarded recipients.

**ENDARTHAR** of Wildwoods (CN hm M18). Edarthar is a fiery-tempered but brilliant mage who often served the crown of Tethyr with his spells, striking down pirate raiders and rebellious nobles. He fled from that country when civil war erupted and has



Dunman Kiriag

since settled in Wildwoods, a woodland mansion near Waymoot. He defeated its former owner, the wizard Orthaerus Manycloaks, in a sorcerous duel to gain possession of the estate.

While in Wildwoods, he has devoted his energies to developing new spells, creating and training a menagerie of servitor creatures (including griffons, umber hulks, and several intelligent oozes and jellies), and trying to destroy the ghost of Orthaerus. It seems that Orthaerus can still cast spells and lurks about the mansion, trying to ambush Endarthar for a rematch! Endarthar values his privacy, especially since every guest who proves hostile is suddenly defended by the resident ghost.

FILANI of Tantras (N hf M9; Sage fields: politics and history of the Dragonreach and Moonsea North). Now a resident of Tilverton, Filani is dignified and graceful despite being as tall and as heavily built as many warriors of renown. Dressed in tentlike but magnificently embroidered gowns, she shuffles about the marketplaces and inns of the town, buying meals and drinks for caravan folk who tell her news. Many of her sources are regular reporters who know they can get their sustenance for free on a night stopover. In this way, Filani keeps abreast of happenings in the area.



As she has a talent for judging character and also for keeping track of many details, she often correctly anticipates events that will unfold in her corner of the world. She's not interested in combat or adventure, but merely in calmly selling her expertise for reasonable fees and thereby passing her days in comfort.

FILFAERIL STORMBILLOW (CG hf M16). Filfaeril is a former adventuress who retired to Marsember, the city of her birth, some 30 years ago. She now makes her living creating and selling magical items and potions to younger adventurers. From these adventurers she also buys rare and special materials she needs to create still more items of magic.

Still beautiful despite her 60-odd winters, Filfaeril is protected by a rare spell that can enclose her in a healing sphere that lashes out at foes with wandlike attacks. On two recent occasions she's defeated attackers in this way. The first set of these attackers was a pirate band bent on capturing her to serve them with her magic; the other was a Zhentarim-led group bent on assassination and grabbing what magic she might have at hand. The attacks have made Filfaeril somewhat cautious, but she has decided against letting them cause her to change her lifestyle.

GAHLAERD MOSSMERE (NG hm M12). This sarcastic, smooth-tongued mage dwells in Tilverton and has a knack for devising highly effective new spells. He sells one or two such magics a year to traveling mages who've come to know the worth of his work. They pay an base price of 10,000 gp per spell level for his creations. Such fees allow him to live very comfortably, protect himself with much personal magic, and continue his researches. Persistent rumors link him with the Rogues of Tilverton, a local band of thieves and outlaws. But then, as he's said, "Rumor runs before us all like a yapping dog that dares not bite. It makes noise enough to annoy but need not be regarded further."

IYRYTHARNA DANTRAS (CG hf M16). Iyrytharna dwells in the countryside near Juniril. She keeps to her underground home and crafts spells most of the time. Her husband Thorn is a maker of fine knives and a werepegasus. From time to time on summer nights, they can be seen over the Wyvernwater from afar, a woman whose unbound hair streams behind her as she rides a swift-winged black Pegasus bareback, both of them rolling and diving in the air in delighted abandon.

**JESTRA** (NG hf Tra18). Jestra dwells in Arabel and makes a very good living by using small magics to improve the appearance, usefulness, and value of objects brought to her by clients. She owns and rents out many houses in the city. She uses one of them, which is linked to her own residence by a

golem-guarded tunnel, to meet discreetly with noble clients who desire anonymity.

Formerly a plain woman, she's become a striking beauty through the use of her magic, though she retains her large, hooked nose because she's fond of it. She is pioneering the use of safe, subtle, long-lasting magic to heighten the beauty of other women. They typically pay her 2,000 to 12,000 gp for treatment. She never identifies her clients and is rarely seen in public except during her morning food shopping which she performs alone. She is identifiable from afar by her long, curly ringlets of glossy blue-black hair.

LASPEERA NAERINTH (NG hf M14). Laspeera runs a school in deportment, courtly speech, and letters for young ladies in Suzail. Graceful, fearless, and widely respected, she is a prominent war wizard and is regarded by Suzailans as the best source of advice for anyone with a moral dilemma. Some grown nobles journey to Suzail to discuss things privately with her just as they once did as young pupils at her exclusive and extremely expensive school. (Rates at the school are 1,000 gp per month.)

The House of Grace turns out young women with superior learning manners, and practice in observation, reasoning, and using their judgment. Its graduates' reputations are so stellar that rich merchants in Sembia who value strong mates come first to suzail to woo.

Almost single-handedly Laspeera has produced a generation of wise, capable noblewomen who are the envy of other lands. She's also been known to tutor pupils in magic from time to time—always in return for a service to be demanded later. This service is almost always timely aid to be delivered when Azoun or the realm of Cormyr is in need. By these means, she's dragged many adventuring bands into defending Cormyr's interests in crises.

**MAERUN STOUTBOLD** (CN hm F5). Maerun is a somewhat disreputable merchant of Suzail who deals in nets, ropes, masts, sails, and ships. He buys, sells, rents, and repairs all of these. He usually winters in Marsember, where his coins are very active in shipbuilding.

Maerun's attraction is his discretion. No matter who's asking, Maerun never talks. The stout, almost moon-faced man has a high natural immunity to mind-probings, both magical and psionic, and has never been convicted of anything illegal. It's open knowledge in Suzail's wharves that Maerun's your man if you want covert shipboard passage out of Suzail or need a ship refitted immediately in the dead of night.

Maerun is a cheerfully amoral man—as long as he gets paid, he's happy. He's been happy often enough that when he was caught by a senior war wizard personally carrying two bound and gagged lasses (undoubtedly kidnapped upland Cormyreans



destined for slavery in Westgate or points south) aboard one of his boats he was able to hire a Sembian mage to swear that the girls were two pet displacer beasts that the mage had *polymorphed* into human form to avoid alarming honest citizens. Maerun was simply shipping them to a client of his. The Suzailan justiciar's comments on the words quoted here were caustic in the extreme, and the court was open in its disbelief—but Maerun walked free. Again.

MAXER HLARR, Defender of Suzail (NG hm Inv11). This reclusive invoker has simple tastes: He likes peace and quiet, with a stable realm around him so he can devote his full attention to building everlarger and more elaborate constructs. The constructs are items animated by combinations of spells. They acquire a limited sentience of their own.

His work and the magical item retrieval work of his constructs have made him far more powerful than his level would indicate. His constructs have successfully recovered magical items from many lich holds and tombs, as well as monster-haunted Myth Drannor and the drowned ruins of a lost, ancient city of sorcerers off Athkatla. Because of the items his constructs have retrieved, he's a walking arsenal of puissant magical weaponry at all times.

King Azoun awarded him the title "Defender," which gives him ranking equal to that of a baron in both the nobility and among Purple Dragons, after an attack on Suzail by four dragons. Maxer unleashed powerful magic to rescue Suzail and several of the prominent mages of the city who were losing their battle against the destructive wyrms.

Maxer remains a quiet, private sort of man. He avoids all requests to teach by would-be apprentices and shies away even more energetically from the overtures of sorceresses who express any interest in getting to know him better.

**MELLOMIR** of Arabel (LN hm M27; Sage fields history, prophecies, and divination). Mellomir is a man respected across the known Realms. A dry, dapper man whose neatly trimmed hair and beard are going white, Mellomir has accurately predicted several important events, including the fall of Bhaal and Myrkul in the Time of Troubles and the reappearance of the fabled *Ring of Winter*. He's survived several kidnapings and single-handedly destroyed an entire Westgate family after it deemed him a foe and tried repeatedly to assassinate him. He's protected by an enchantment of his own devising that gives his body permanent, continuous, automatic spell warding equal in effects to a *ring of spell turning*.

Myschanta Halarra (CG hf Abj14). Myschanta dwells in Arabel and is much in demand as a sorceress-for-hire. Fat, short, and energetic, she chuckles and snorts her way cheerfully through life, clad



Myschanta Halarra

in a succession of old breeches, vests, swash-topped boots and rumpled hide shirts that make her look like a stablemaster or hostler rather than a mage. She is one of the rare workers-of-magic who'll ride out to the rescue of beleaguered adventurers, though her fees are high. She charges 6,000 gp for a simple service like guiding folk to a spot, bringing healing potions to a locale, or affecting an escape from a prison cell, and this base price doubles for any spell combat situations.

She's a capable spellcaster with a shrewd grasp of tactics and experience in dealing with many monsters, and she's seldom caught by surprise. She always seems to have an item or timely spell up her sleeve. If she's sorely injured or slain, a *contingency* spell whisks her body to High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon, who "owes her a favor or six." This has happened twice to the astonishment of the court in Silverymoon, but that's only twice in 30-odd years of her being called into desperate situations.

ORBRIL of Skull Crag (CN hm M15). A haughty, blond-bearded and increasingly stout wizard who loves good food and lots of it, Orbril doesn't dwell in Skull Crag at all but in a peaktop tower nearby that is high above the Crag. From this windswept aerie he runs a magical delivery service. For stiff fees





Szwentil Illeon

(10,000 gp and up) he delivers prepared packages to precise locations at prearranged times. For instance, he may agree to send a strongchest containing food, potions of healing, weapons, wine, and spell scrolls to a certain cavern in Undermountain either at moonrise on Uktar 11th or when a magical alarm is set off by the entry of a particular being into that cavern. For dangerous or hostile deliveries, such as sending a lit torch into a warehouse where barrels of oil are stored or putting a stone block into the air directly above someone's throne or bed, Orbril demands three to four times his base fee, and he doubles that total if his target is a wizard or magical retaliation is likely.

Orbril's many transportation spells are secret magics of his own devising, but two properties of the spells he uses most often are known: He can deliver a second item to the same spot almost instantly (for example, if his first strike against a target fails), and he can follow any sending to its destination without error, work magic or perform physical acts there, and then return to his aerie by force of will alone, snapped back to his departure point.

These capabilities and Orbril's use of them have made him unpopular with a growing number of mages, rulers, and leaders of violent organiza-

tions (such as thieving guilds), and they've mounted several attacks on his home. Recently the Zhentarim sent in six specially equipped ju-ju zombies, who tried to occupy Orbril with magical attacks while a beholder teleported in to launch the main attack on him. Orbril escaped by triggering several blade barrier like defensive fields and teleporting to a storage cavern of his own. From there he sent four death tyrants (undead beholders) to deal with his attackers. Then he used unknown means to trace the Zhentarim, who were observing all this via crystal ball, and sent a delayed blast fireball to them.

PERAPHON THOND (CN hm F3). Peraphon is a slim, short, elegant man with a goatee, perfumed black hair, dark clothing, and a plenitude of gleaming and glittering finger rings. He's a supercilious, sneering man who's known to be very shrewd (which is not to say double-dealing) in investments and business negotiations—hence his long row of warehouses just inside the western face of Arabel's city wall. He always has something up his sleeves to deal with treachery.

He often hires adventurers to go prospecting in the Stonelands or to work certain mines there that he can provide maps or directions to. Unfortunately for the adventurers, these mines are imperiled by lurking monsters, and Peraphon often neglects to mention this unless pointedly asked.

Peraphon is extremely wealthy and is known to have purchased some powerful magics to protect himself against personal attack. One of his rings is a ring of spell turning and another is thought to hold six or more gargoyles that he can summon forth and bend to his will.

RULDAN NYSGART (NG hm M16). This mage dwells in a simple cottage in the back woods near Espar, and he there trains more would-be wizards than any other mage of Cormyr. From near and far they come to him to be taught a single spell each and sent forth to gain practice in its use. In this way Ruldan keeps himself supplied with a dozen or so apprentices at once and makes quite a good living. His cottage rarely has fewer than six wizards of low to middling levels in it.

His students are under strict orders not to bother the good folk of Espar or the vicinity in any way, so as not to make themselves or Ruldan himself unwelcome. Ruldan is a kindly, patient, nondescript man whose brown beard conceals several powerful *tokens* of his own crafting that have powers akin to better-known magical rings. In this way, he commands powers equal to four or five such items at once.

SASZESK (NE hm F3). Saszesk is a shadowy, semilegendary man in Suzail. He's the skulker in shadows blamed for all manner of disappearances.



In reality, the shy, soft-spoken Saszesk was long ago co-opted by the war wizards to serve the Crown. He remains an effective smuggler of goods and folk into and out of Suzail—but pays tithes to the Court and keeps Vangerdahast scrupulously informed as to everything he handles. His work provides a handy relief valve for things best handled covertly and lets Azoun know just who among his citizens is most disloyal.

Saszesk lives in a complex of cellars under the Six Candles inn, a property he owns in the north-western reach of Suzail, guarded by traps and by his use of a hat of disguise. He's comfortably wealthy, but his coins are hidden somewhere else—reputedly in a cellar somewhere under the Royal Court.

SZWENTIL ILLEON (NE hm F5). This slim, saturnine, young-looking man always dresses neatly in black and surrounds himself with bodyguards, including several hired battle mages. One of the founders of the Six Coffers Market Priakos, Szwentil is rumored to have a personal fortune of over six million gold pieces and over a dozen houses in as many lands.

Rumors persist in his home city of Marsember that he is involved in large-scale smuggling, but some citizens take the view that he need not make coins in such risky ways. He's wealthy enough to buy up stocks of any valuable goods in order to create shortages whenever he desires and then release his holdings at top prices to swell his wealth manyfold. That he does not is a measure of the limits of his greed and of his desire to remain as anonymous as possible.

Szwentil is calculating, farsighted, and totally amoral. He currently devotes most of his time to two projects: openly overseeing the building of many ships and buildings in Sembia and covertly purchasing as much Cormyrean and Sembian land as possible. With land and ships, he thinks to build himself into a power as great as any ruler—with none of the burdens of scrutiny and accountability a ruler must bear.

**THEAVOS THONTAR** (LN hm W17). Theavos is a lusty, rollicking, good-natured man who enjoys jests, pranks, partying, and teasing the authorities and stuffier folk in his home city of Arabel. As a result, many of these people detest him, and others find he wears on the nerves a bit much.

The life of many a party, Theavos enjoys juggling will-o'-wisps, small children, and full wine goblets overhead while he dances with the youngest and prettiest maidens who dare to approach him. He has romanced more than one visiting lady with a whirlwind of gifts, compliments, and kindly deeds.

All of this gaiety conceals well his role as an information-gatherer (spy) for Vangerdahast, and



**Tongreth** 

that status in turn masks his deeper loyalty to the Harpers, to whom he feeds state secrets of Cormyr along with everything else he learns. Azoun and several of his relatives grew up enjoying the antics of Theavos, who treated them as equals to be entertained whenever they came within reach. They are so fond of him that, were his spying to be revealed tomorrow, it's likely he'd escape any punishment entirely.

**THENTLAS** (CN hm F3). Primarily known as a large-scale landlord in both Suzail and Yhaunn, Thentias is a calm, unassuming man who likes to work behind the scenes, dispassionately devising precisely how to reap the most gold out of life. He rents, buys, and sells properties through agents. In Suzail, he works through Ramkzorn Sharlin or Alasgar Thurym. He also has an undercover bodyguard force that he uses to protect himself from rivals who resort to violence and to strike back at foes. His notable holdings in Suzail include the Wailing Wheel inn and the entire east side of Mistmoat Alley.

**TONGRETH** of Marsember (LN hm Con21). Tongreth is a recent arrival in the city (from just where, he declines to say). A subtle, controlled



man known for his extensive wine cellar and love of cuddly kittens, old books, and jellied eels, Tongreth is a master conjurer who deals ably with many creatures of other planes. He is served in Marsember by both gargoyles and griffons. He enjoys working behind the scenes in the ever-shifting intrigues of Marsember, ensuring that interests from Sembia and Westgate never manage to dominate the city. Recent rumors suggest he comes from, and may still serve, Thay.

**TSHARLURA** of Blackthorne (LG hf M14). A kindly, respectable woman, Tsharliira dwells in her own fortified mansion not far west of Eveningstar. Blackthorne is guarded by a resident family of wyverns that adventurers and Purple Dragons alike venturing into the area are warned not to molest.

Tsharliira has impeccable manners and dignity. Azoun often brings visiting nobility to visit her to impress them with the strong cultured ladies of the realm after they first encounter Laspeera in Suzail. Sharliira is tolerant of lawless behavior in others, but always acts to promote peace, harmony, and safety in Cormyr. Severely beaten in her youth by drunken relatives, she's been known to fly into a fury when she encounters drunks and to use her spells to administer some rather frightening soberup cures involving wild flying, plunges into icy pools, and the like.

Tsharliira is working on several projects of practical magic. One is a chest that drinks energy in a remote spot and emits it as heat and light. When she perfects methods of controlling the heat and light, such chests could be used to light and warm cottages in winter by drawing heat from compost, hot springs, manure piles, and large, communal peat-banked fires. Unfortunately for chilly Cormyreans, Tsharliira is a slow, careful, methodical worker, more interested in properly documenting everything for later mages than in achieving swift results.

**UNGATHROS** of Mistrim (NG hm M15). Ungathros is a wizard noted for his skill at magically repairing wagons, ships, and roofs. He is a mild-mannered, unassuming man who looks more like a messenger than a mage, but when angered his temper is legendary. He's usually embroiled in a dozen or so feuds with merchants who've tried to cheat him. Mistrim, his country mansion near Marsember, is guarded by many monsters because of past attacks by his foes. These creatures claim victims every year because of (false) rumors that persist in Westgate and Sembia about the great riches Ungathros has stored there.

VALANTHA SHIMMERSTAR (CG hf M13). A fun-loving war wizard, Valantha can readily move a raucous crowd to tears with her singing, as she does at many

parties in Suzail, and just as readily scandalize and entertain with outrageous pranks. She has slipped a live lizard down Queen Filfaeril's bodice, and she has often used her magic to perfectly mimic the most stuffy old noble at a feast. Pretending to be the noble, she utters flirtatious remarks and sly innuendoes, twisting every favorite phrase of the man she's lampooning.

Her acting abilities coupled with magical disguises have aided her in standing in for various royals and nobility in dangerous situations. Vangerdahast regards her as one of his most able and valuable assistants, and he tolerates her outrageous pranks because of it. Suzailans still talk about the time she walked into an exceedingly long Council of Mages meeting in a diaphanous nightgown and asked Vangerdahast when he'd be coming to bed, because "the pastries are gone and all sixteen of us are getting bored"!

VINDALA CHALANTHER (NG hf Ill15). Vindala dwells in Marsember, tutoring lesser mages and occasionally hiring out her spellcasting abilities—to both desperate adventurers and crafty smugglers, locals say. Though she spends days at a time magically disguised, she is said to be an impish beauty with a petite build, glossy black eyes, and hair to match her eyes. She has a quick temper, a habit of getting even, and a prankish sense of humor. To their cost, many pirates have learned that she makes a bad enemy.

WENDEIRA ILLATHOS (CN hf C12 of Gond). Wendeira is a free-spirited worshiper of the god of artifice who stimulates many folk to buy, improve upon, and use unusual devices and items crafted by all of the intelligent races of Faerûn. She sells such odd wares from a shop in the hamlet of Monksblade called Wendeira's Wondery. Living and working alone there, she affects a fey appearance and strange airs to discourage thieves and anyone with thoughts of slave-snatching. She is in fact a clever and perceptive woman and completely sane.

She enjoys slipping out of her shop for hunting expeditions with the items she uses to defend herself if attacked in her shop: gunpowder wands. These gunpowder wands are the first handguns known outside Lantan. They are two-shot, silverplated affairs that inflict 1d8+1 points of damage each per successful shot; they have a range of 70 feet. Consecrated to Gond, these weapons are deadly in Wendeira's hands, and she's never without them or her ring of free action and her ring of spell turning — so beware! She carries the gunpowder wands loaded her boots.

Wendeira is looking for a suitable mate. She will settle for just about anyone who happens to be a brilliant inventor.



# Appendix II: The Sword Heralds



ne of the most fascinating—and little known subjects in any study of the folklore of Cormyr is the Sword Heralds. Volo made

such a hash of wild speculations about these rather mysterious folk that Elminster said grimly, "We fix that, or this book gets renamed forthwith: Volo's Guide to the Effects of an Imprisonment Spell on the Victim, Written from Personal Experience." So here, in game terms, is what Elminster would reveal about this topic. He offers it with only one bit of advice: "Remember, ye're not the first gung-ho adventurers to learn about all this—and where are all those predecessors now?"

The Sword Heralds were mages of Cormyr long ago. They specialized in creating hideaways: extradimensional refuges that only the most wealthy folknobles, successful merchants, and powerful priests and wizards-could afford. Such refuges were of great importance when Cormyr was a wild land roamed by monsters and rivals and lashed by weather that one hadn't time to construct sufficient shelter to withstand (because of warfare, failing crops, or the like). Eventually, these refuges ceased to be hiding places for folk fleeing the weather or the blades of enemies. They were then commonly used to store valuables and perishable treasures because within them there are no extremes of heat and cold, nor any precipitation, keeping weathering to a minimum.

Abandoned or forgotten refuges that have been rediscovered sometimes hold elaborate antique ladies' gowns that are now much sought-after at court.

The Sword Heralds acquired the name by which history knows them today because entry to one of their refuges could only be accomplished by someone going to a particular secret spot with two items: something fairly common but kept a family secret, and an edged metal weapon that one of the Sword Heralds had touched during the enchantment. The common items ranged from a cup of water or mushroom soup to a human bone, a stag antler, or a leaf from a particular type of tree. The edged weapons were typically one of 3 to 12 swords and/or daggers owned by the family to whom the refuge was constructed. The common item was always consumed during the magical passage into the refuge, and in a few cases the weapons also couldn't pass into the refuge and would fall to the floor at the spot at which the activating being entered the refuge. Exit from such refuges typically requires only entering a specific areausually the end of a blind corridor-and not any sort of ritual or triggering items.

Entrants into a hideaway could bring a living being who was touching them along with them, as well as anything they or this second being wore or carried. Typically, noble houses and wealthy merchants took gems, coins, and legal documents into their refuges to begin with. Only in desperate circumstances did the



owners discover that these refuges were ideal hiding places for fugitives from justice and inconvenient corpses.

The Sword Heralds died or disappeared centuries ago, and many refuges are now lost or their precise whereabouts forgotten, though a few remain closely guarded family secrets. (The Hidden House used by Lord Tessaril Winter of Eveningstar<sup>1</sup> is one such.) By ancient law, a king of Cormyr and his agents (for example, the war wizards) cannot demand to see or enter such a refuge or even force someone to confirm the existence of a refuge. This hasn't stopped them from employing chartered adventurers and private citizens to find out such things for them. As a result, many refuges sport traps and/or guardians. The traps typically are deadly defenses of the main passage in the refuge, and are often consist of hinged falling stone blocks and hedgehogs.2 Guardians range from animated skeletons to family liches.

The Sword Heralds are said to have left behind a list of all their refuges, disguised in a series of impenetrable verses (one example follows) that they hid all over Cormyr in the halls of the Palace of the Purple Dragon, the Royal Court, and in private homes alike. The Sword Herald also constructed great keys—small items that various sages violently disagree over the forms of, from orbs to rods to gauntlets—that open the way into all Sword Herald refuges when used in the proper place, even without the proper

blade or common item.

Some refuges have been found by adventurers. Most notable among these finds is that of the Dawninghunt refuge in 1346 DR, which proved to contain a chest of over a thousand large and splendid emeralds as well as four big, extensive spellbooks and several items of minor magic—and a wardrobe of fine gowns once worn 200 years earlier by the Lady Rhyndaera Dawninghunt. These garments became an instant fashion rage at court when reintroduced by nobles who'd bought them from the fortunate adventurers.

The Golden Griffon Eyes all-woman adventuring band from Selgaunt (charter by Azoun's hand in 1341 DR) made its fortune on the find and settled into retirement on luxurious wooded estates near Espar. They earned their hard-sought riches not only by defeating a formidable guardian monster of unknown species, but also by discerning the meaning of the following verse:

Full moon on Wyvernwater touches thee, Proud warrior conquering benches three. Where the smaller steel points a way, Stand where the lonely warrior may.

This verse referred to a statue of Ring Dhalmass that still stands on the banks of the Wyvernwater hard by Hultail. The statue depicts the armed and armored king on a rearing horse whose hooves prance on three stone benches that form the base of the statue. The king is waving

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>As described in the novel Crown of Fire.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>A hedgehog in this sense, is a giant shield weighted with rocks or bricks on its upper side and festooned with a forest of downward-pointing swordblades on its lower side. It is triggered by a treadle or by stepping on a flagstone, which releases a catch. The whole affair the plummets down on a chain to impale intruders from above. A successful Intelligence ability check and a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation are required to completely avoid this deadly trap once it is triggered. If only one roll succeeds, half damage is suffered; full damage is 5d6 points.





a sword over his head and is outlined in moonlight whenever a full moon shines down on the area.

The sculpted monarch also has a dagger at his waist. If one looks at where its sharp end is pointing, one sees a small rocky knoll about a mile away that is known as Knight's Stand because a lone warrior once held its height against an orc band. The knoll is also flooded with moonlight when the moon is full. If one stands on it with the right blade and item (in this case, a handful of grass) or one of the Sword Heralds' great keys, one can see an upright oval of light that is the *gate* into the Dawninghunt Vault.

A person using the *gate* enters a small room that holds only a chair, a table, a chamberpot, a stoppered carafe of water, a cot, a candle lantern, and lots of dust.

The names of Dawninghunt ancestors, along with the dates of their lives, are inscribed on large stones set flush in the walls as if these ancestors were interred behind the stones. If one puts the chair up on the table, however, part of the floor of this chamber vanishes to reveal stairs down into the vault proper: a large room lit by a driftglobe. Its unfailing light once fell upon a stack of chests crammed with coins, gems, and trade bars of silver and gold, now part of the Golden Griffon Eyes' wealth. The driftglobe gleams still on the tombs of six Dawninghunts, including the sage Harglast Dawninghunt, whose coffin is now enclosed by a forcecage (and contingency spells that set off certain alarm spells elsewhere, among other things). These precautions have been taken to keep adventurers from magically ques-



tioning him about his field of expertise: magical items of early Cormyr!

Another verse of the Sword Heralds has become well-known because it appears and disappears from time to time (seemingly at random) on the top of a tomb in a public crypt in Suzail:

Glonder rides a long long way
Through forests wild and marshes fey,
And at the place of many nets,
Glonder walks, but first frets.

To decipher this, one must know that almost 300 years ago the mage Glonder rode the length of Calantar's Way in a single night and day to meet and defeat a dragon. The only place on this route where one might find "many nets" is Immersea, where the mist-fishers employ many nets indeed. From time to time the phantom of Glonder is seen in Immersea, wringing his hands or rushing about with his hands raised in endless spellcasting. So one must find the spot where the phantom first appears on its sporadic nightly rounds, and there one must take the right blade and item to find the way to an unknown refuge.

These directions were worked out by the court jester Ubaldo over a century ago, but no one knows what the right common item is, or has the right blade, or has discerned precisely where the phantom first appears. However, where it appears must be the cellar of some structure in Immersea, because the phantom then rises up out of Calantar's Way and rushes to a certain alley. Standing with a great key in hand in the spot where Glonder rises through the street has proven ineffective.

At least eight great keys are known to exist, but it is thought that many more have been hidden or stolen. Much of the argument over what the keys look like centers on these missing keys, one of which is perennially rumored to be for sale or rent in Sembia. Local lore in Suzail insists that one of the scepters of the extensive Obarskyr regalia has a great key built into it. Suzailan lore also holds that another great key was long ago given into the keeping of an anonymous commoner of the city at a masked ball, so that the realm might have a chance of survival if evil magic possessed the mind of its king or evil forces swept over the land with conquering armies. The sage Tharondar of Arabel (now deceased, but writing well after the Sword Heralds disappeared) postulates that there may be lesser keys that open several refuges, but not all of them. Like so much about the work of the Sword Heralds, this may be pure speculation.

We do know that there were at least 17 Sword Heralds, that they weren't formal heralds of any sort (though they did offer nobility of the realm the service of limning a chosen badge-of-arms on stone walls and other permanent locations), that they were powerful wizards who devised many hitherto unknown and now-forgotten spells, that they indulged in planar travel and in feuds with the Red Wizards of Thay, and that the most powerful of them was a man called Yimluth. Yimluth was an archmage of at least 26th level and a werestag. He could take the form of a stag or a hairy-hided manlike form with a stag's head. Ultimately he was unable to leave one of these bestial forms, and he remains in hiding somewhere in the Ring's Forest if he hasn't



been slain. (It's generally agreed he had achieved near-immortality.) He also may be traveling from refuge to refuge by means of powerful magic that enables him to jump from one extradimensional place to another.

One group of bards and sages believe Yimluth now serves Mielikki or Silvanus in order to achieve demigodhood or that he is a demigod already. Another group swears that he is in some sort of stasis, awaiting a desperate call from the throne of Cormyr that will bring him to the defense of the realm in its time of greatest need. As Elminster commented dryly, it's clear only that his true fate is unknown.

Another Sword Herald whose name is remembered is Murald. He was a lover of gardens and tapestries. At least six paintings and tapestries on the walls of various inner chambers of the Palace of the Purple Dragon are his work. They are also gates to different locales in the Realms. One of these locations is a hunting lodge somewhere in the heart of the Ring's Forest, another depiction leads to the eastern slope of Maiden's Tomb Tor near Waterdeep, and a third is known to lead to a cavern refuge in the Storm Horns somewhere overlooking Espar that is kept stocked with weapons, foodstuffs, and helmed horror guardians.

The aims, identities, and ultimate fates of the Sword Heralds remain shrouded in mystery. All that is known is that they came to the realm suddenly, but without fuss, had no open strife with the Crown or nobles, and worked on many things that enriched the realm. On several occasions they sat in judgment on an individual or a policy, trying to awe the king or the nobles into seeing things as they did.



These assemblies so impressed the folk of the day that everyday Cormyrean speech today applies the term "full swords court" to any fancy, formal, or very important and solemn occasion.

Although the Sword Heralds seem to have vanished, some folk believe at least a few of them still survive. It's a popular superstition that they're still guiding or influencing the realm, unseen, today. Mothers and old wives sometimes chide misbehaving children with the saying: "Remember—the Heralds are watching!" Many members of the staff of the Palace of the Purple Dragon believe that some of the ghosts haunting the courts and gardens in Suzail are Sword Heralds or their servant creatures, but the truth about the Heralds has so far eluded Vangerdahast, and if Elminster knows, he's not telling.



# Appendix III:

# Magic in Cormyr



agic in Cormyr is a vigorous, ongoing thing. It is as driven today by pride, competition, the needs of war, and ambition as it was by

survival against dragons and other monstrous foes when the land was younger. It's a field far beyond the scope of any single work and certainly beyond the rather (as Elminster sourly puts it) "goshwow" treatment magic receives in any work by Volo. The Old Mage of Shadowdale demanded, however, that the worst of Volo's distortions and errors be replaced by this appendix, "Just so ye'll have the faintest of notions regarding what he's babbling about." So (sigh) here goes.

# Gates in Cormyr

Permanent teleport portals, or gates, have long been present in Cormyr. The Sword Heralds (discussed in Appendix II) created many specialized gates, and royal and noble families down through the years have used many methods to acquire their own private magical transport. A servant of Mielikki or, if one believes the faithful, the goddess herself created the Blueleaf Gate. This little-known transport links a blueleaf tree in the Royal Gardens of Suzail with another blueleaf tree that stands beside the rising headwaters of a clear spring in the Ring's Forest, just south of Eveningstar.

A being who touches either tree and speaks a secret word of activation is

transported (teleport without error) to the other tree, along with all worn or carried goods and, if desired, another being. This extra person must be directly touched, but need not be conscious or even alive.

This route has long been used by war wizards, king's messengers, and other agents of the crown to quickly and untraceably travel the length of Cormyr's heartlands. Azoun has used it all his life to visit Tessaril Winter in Eveningstar. During Azoun's reign, Vangerdahast has always set war wizards armed with various tracing spells to watch over both trees to see who comes and goes. These sentinels never challenge users, and they usually remain unseen.

A similar route, linking nine standing stones, spans the western "wall" of the realm, leaping from high valley to rocky height to cliffside cavern along the Storm Horns that march down the western flank of Cormyr. This network is thought to have been created by a now-vanished school or community of wizards who dwelt in isolation in the mountains and who wanted a swift way in and out of their home that allowed them to avoid mountain-climbing.

If one believes local lore and war wizards' reports, other *gate* networks—origins unknown—exist in the Hullack Forest and the Stonelands. The Forest Kingdom of Cormyr—and in particular, its wilder fringes and surrounding back country—has long been favored territory for mages looking to settle down in



peaceful isolation and work on their magical arts.

# Wizards in Cormyr

Down through the centuries, Cormyr's pastoral beauty has been embraced by hundreds of powerful wizards. Their cottages and small mage towers—or their ruins—stand amid the trees on many a side lane or wooded trail in the realm. Vangerdahast frowns severely on mages who kidnap or experiment on local beasts and beings, but other wizards are left alone so long as they don't work against the Crown. (In the past, many nobles hired penniless wizards to assist in attempts to overthrow the Obarskyrs.)

Some of the most notable current independent mages resident in Cormyr are listed hereafter. Details of these personages can be found in Appendix I. Elminster cautions that this list is very incomplete. It was compiled by Volo, and it concentrates on mages who don't bother to—or who can't—hide themselves away from general knowledge.

#### Arabel

Jestra (NG hf Tra18)
Mellomir of Arabel (LN hm M27; Sage fields: history, prophecies, and divination)

Myschanta Halarra (CG hf Abj14) Theavos Thontar (LN hm M17)

#### Vicinity of Espar

Ruldan Nysgart (NG hm M16)

#### Vicinity of Eveningstar

Tsharliira of Blackthorne (LG hf M14)

#### Vicinity of Juniril

Iyrytharna Dantras (CG hf M16)

#### Marsember

Delthrin the Deadmaster (NE hm Nec12) Filfaeril Stormbillow (CG hf M16) Tongreth of Marsember (LN hm M21) Vindala Chalanther (NG hf Ill15)

#### Vicinity of Marsember

Ungathros of Mistrim (NG hm M15)

#### Vicinity of Skull Crag

Orbril of Skull Crag (CN hm M15)

#### Suzail

Argûl Marammas (LN hm M13) Baskor Tranth (NG hm M9) Laspeera Naerinth (NG hf M14) Maxer Hlarr, Defender of Suzail (NG hm Inv11)

Valantha Shimmerstar (CG hf M13)

#### Tilverton

Filani of Tantras (N hf M9; Sage fields: politics & history of the Dragonreach, politics & history of the Moonsea North)

Gahlaerd Mossmere (NG hm M12)

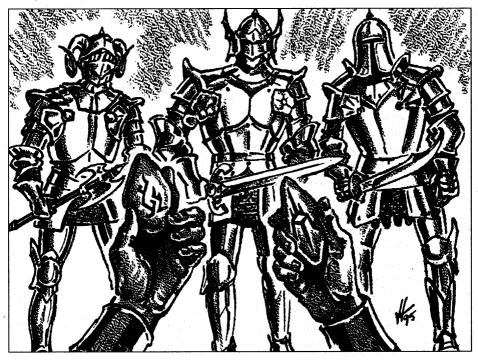
#### Vicinity of Waymoot

Endarthar of Wildwoods (CN hm M18)

# Wards in Cormyr

Without a doubt some of the nobles, powerful mages, and wealthy merchants of Cormyr have wards. Wards are magical defenses that act only on beings who don't possess a token allowing free passage or who try to pass them in an unapproved manner. The wards put in place





by the rich and powerful citizens of Cormyr have a wide variety of effects, and these wards aren't dealt with here. The Crown of Cormyr, however, employs three standard types of wards throughout the realm—the ring ward, cloak ward, and full ward—and these are detailed here. The spells such wards are based on are akin to the 7th-level wizard spell wardmist, detailed in previous guidebooks in this series. The spells, however, are state secrets of Cormyr and so don't appear here.

It has long been rumored that the Obarskyr family has a private refuge where its greatest treasures are stored that is guarded by something called a dragon ward. The dragon ward supposedly unleashes magic akin to dragon breath attacks, and like dragon breath it can lash out for a great distance down passages, permitting no one to elude the effects. But, as of this writing, such rumors remain unconfirmed.

## Ring Ward

The weakest type of ward is known as a ring ward because a *Purple Dragon ring* permits passage through it, as do all the pass tokens listed hereafter for the more powerful wards. If unauthorized beings try to pass this sort of ward, they receive a mild energy shock. This shock is designed to turn aside birds, snakes, cattle, and other unintelligent life, and it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: Consider thyselves warned of their existence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: Because we'd all like them to remain state secrets.



does deals 1 point of damage to any character failing a saving throw vs. spell. Unauthorized contact with the ward triggers an alarm in the form of a light or a sound, as determined when the ward was created. The ward also blocks the passage of all spells of 3rd level or lower, absorbing their energies. Thus, a wizard employing a fly spell who penetrates a ward—such as those around the towers of the Palace of the Purple Dragon in Suzail—loses the ability of flight and falls.

#### Cloak Ward

The middle type of ward is called a cloak ward because a war wizard cloak permits passage through it, as do a commander's ring and a passagestone (but not a Purple Dragon ring). Unauthorized contact with a cloak ward has the same effects as disturbing a ring ward. In addition, any intruding creatures must make two additional saving throws, one vs. spell and one vs. paralyzation.

If the saving throws vs. spell fail, intruders are chilled for 6d6 points of damage (similar to the damage of a wand of frost, treating all 1s rolled as 2s). If these saving throws succeed, only half damage is inflicted. If the saving throws vs. paralyzation fail, creatures are also stunned for 1d2 rounds, reeling and unable to think or act voluntarily. Note that stunned creatures normally remain in the ward, suffering the 6d6 points of chilling damage again on the rounds in which they are stunned. If the saving throws vs. paralyzation succeed, intruders suffer no stun effects.

Undead intruders must also make these two saving throws. If both fail, they are disrupted (destroyed utterly). If only one fails, undead intruders sustain 5d4 points of damage. If both succeed, these undead pass through the ward with no ill effects.

#### Full Ward

The strongest type of ward is the full ward. These wards vary in specific powers, but all full wards can be passed through by means of a *commander's ring* or a *passagestone* but not a *Purple Dragon ring* or a *war wizard cloak*.

The effects of violating a full ward combine the harmful and warning effects of both lesser types of wards, plus the invisible full ward has a "soft" outer edge about 3 feet in depth that hardens into a barrier akin to a wall of force. This inner portion of the ward also acts a ring of spell turning on all magic that comes into contact with it.

In some full wards, such as one encircling the royal bedchambers in the palace in Suzail, the solid innermost portion manifests only when one is going in, and it doesn't exist to someone exiting the warded area. In others, such as the ones around all Purple Dragon armories, it is absolute in both directions.

# Magical Items of the Crown

Here follow details of some of the magical items made and used by the governing forces of Cormyr. There are apt to be many near-identical specimens of these items in use in the realm at anytime. Possession of one by someone who is not an agent of the Crown is an offense that brings immediate arrest and a very thorough questioning by war wizards employing thought-reading



magic as well as probing questions. Adventurers are advised that the only good bluffs when caught with one of these items are: "I'm a king's messenger," "I'm an agent of the war wizards," or "The king (or Vangerdahast) gave it to me to use on a special mission I'm not allowed to tell you about—but which I'm engaged in right now!" People using these defenses must be ready to flee Cormyr instantly if they try them on anyone above the rank of first sword [sergeant] in the Purple Dragons, a novice war wizard apprentice, or a nonroyal courtier!

Like other entries in this appendix, the selection presented here shouldn't be considered definitive. It includes only items Volo could gain details about, though admittedly he learned far more than the common citizenry of Cormyr ever discern. The bracers and cloak are employed by war wizards and sometimes by the heads of important noble families. The Purple Dragon ring, rod and blade are used by Purple Dragons-and generally by officers, not common soldiers. The farrarer commander's ring and passagestone are only borne by important courtiers, high-ranking military officers, local lords, and members of the royal family. Elminster notes that many stolen items of Crown magic have been found in chests that were shallowly buried, stuffed into hollow trees, or hidden in attics, crypts, warehouses, and inn cellars-and that more turn up every day in Cormyr.

#### Battlestan Bracers

**XP Value:** 4,000 **GP Value:** 8,500

These plain metal wristbands do not augment Armor Class in any way, and they

may be worn and used with or without other armor by all character classes. Both bracers must be worn or neither operates; their power is connected to a magical resonance between them. Wearers of the bracers are shielded at all times with protection identical to that provided by the 3rd-level wizard spell protection from normal missiles. All fire-based attacks and magic missiles striking the wearers are reduced in the amount of damage they inflict by 1 point per die of damage.

In addition, by silent effort of will, every third round the *bracers* can either fire four *magic missiles* or emit one *flaming sphere*. The *magic missiles* function (except in number) similar to the 1st-level wizard spell *magic missile*. They cause 1d4+1 points of damage each and can be used on up to four separate targets. The *flaming sphere* functions similar to the 2nd-level wizard spell of the same name, appears and moves in the direction the *bracer* - wearer points, and cannot be redirected once set in motion.

## Baulgroth's Blade

**XP Value:** 1,500 **GP Value:** 3,000

These plain long swords, broad swords, or sabers bear a +1 enchantment and are used in training, rough surgery (cutting open an infected body area) or sometimes to scare an individual. Named for the long-dead wizard who invented them, *Baulgroth's blades* are issued to every Purple Dragon barracks and garrison.

Whenever one of these weapons successfully damages living flesh, it can be willed by the wielder to perform a *cure light wounds* upon the being it has struck,



restoring 1d8 points of damage. The blade's damage and healing rolls are made separately; they aren't always the same. When this healing power isn't being used, the only sign that a *Baulgroth's blade* isn't an ordinary weapon is that its point trails a quickly fading line of radiance as it is wielded. The radiance is bright enough to find keyholes, inscriptions, and the like in the dark. Purple Dragons sometimes use this trait of a *Baulgroth's blade* to fool opponents into thinking they face a powerful magical blade.

## Commander's Ring

XP Value: 6,000

GP Value: 12,000 (up to 18,000 if sold to enemies of Cormyr in Sembia or Westgate) These hardened gold bands bear the engraved Purple Dragon device of the Obarskyr royal family. They function as rings of protection +2 with five additional powers. A commander's ring can emit magic equal in all respects to the spells featherfall, knock, wall of force, and continual light up to three times (for each ability) per day. It can also trace any Purple Dragon rings (see below) within 100 feet of it, giving the wearer of the commander's ring a feeling for the distance and direction of each such ring, or it can allow the wearer to choose one such ring and concentrate on its movements, blocking out the indications of others. Most Purple Dragons are aware that their superiors can trace their movements in this way.

One commander's ring can't trace another commander's ring. If this ring is worn on the same hand as a *Purple Dragon ring*, the two rings function normally, but they only count as one ring for purposes of how many rings can be worn by the wearer. Thus, the wearer can wear and use a third magical ring at the same time. This is one of the very rare instances in which this can be done.

## Purple Dragon Ring

**XP Value:** 2,500 **GP Value:** 4,000

These brass rings bear the engraved Purple Dragon device of the Obarskyr royal family. They have two powers, both of which can be used without limit. When worn, a *Purple Dragon ring* can cause *light* lasting for 1 turn. This radiance occurs in a 10-foot sphere around the *ring* or up to 40 feet away from it in the direction the wearer's points, using the hand the *ring* is on. Once created, this *light* lasts a full turn unless dispelled by some other method; the *Purple Dragon ring* cannot disperse it.

A Purple Dragon ring can also be used to detect poison by speaking its word of activation, which is engraved on the inside of the band (usually "Bonthar"), and immersing it in the substance to be tested. The ring can test liquids, gases, or solids. Solids are tested by making an incision or carving in the substance to put the ring into full contact with it.

The ring glows an eerie golden-green if it encounters anything harmful to humans, demihumans, and humanoids and a bright blue if it comes into contact with something enchanted that may or may not be harmful. This roundabout detect magic ability is usually used to make sure that potions sold in Cormyr are the real thing and not merely flavored oils or water.



Purple Dragons have standing orders to test food and drink that they purchase or seize whenever they're outside civilized Cormyr and on all other occasions when they're suspicious of cooks or viands. Poisoners acting for Westgate, the Zhentarim, and other foes of the Crown work tirelessly to bring the Obarskyr line to an end, despite repeated failures. Thus, all food served to any royal family member or officer of the court, including local lords and heralds, not just courtiers in Suzail, is so tested as a matter of course.

These rings are seldom worn by Purple Dragons below the rank of lionar (sergeant of sergeants<sup>3</sup>) unless they are on a special mission. A few have been given to special friends of the Crown as pass tokens.<sup>4</sup> Over 4,000 are known to have been made. Some are stored in all three of Cormyr's cities, and they can be issued in a matter of hours when needed.

## Peacemaker's Rod

XP Value: 5,000 GP Value: 10,000

This sort of rod is a black metal baton with the Purple Dragon sculpted in brass at both ends. *Peacemaker's rods* are borne by patrol leaders whenever Purple Dragons are sent on patrol and are held in every Purple Dragon armory. Over 2,000 of them are known to exist. Patrols are often sent out bearing them during festival days or times of possible unrest, such as on nights when over a dozen ships have docked at Suzail or Marsember or a similar quantity of caravans have

arrived at once and the crews of all are quenching their thirsts at local taverns.

A peacemaker's rod is a +2 weapon, dealing 1d6+1 points of damage per blow when wielded in battle. Whenever it hits, the wielder can elect to have it inflict normal damage or call on an special battle power instead. These special battle powers are usable without limit but can be evoked only once every other round in which the rod is successfully used to strike in battle. The three special battle powers are:

- ♦ The rod can deal double damage (rather than normal damage).
- ❖ It can cast hold monster as the 5th-level wizard spell, but with only the struck being as the target. The target must make a successful saving throw vs. spell at -3 to avoid the effects.
- It can repulse its struck target (only) for 12 rounds, similar to the 6th-level wizard spell repulsion.

A peacemaker's rod has one additional power: It can fire a 10-foot-diameter sphere of light in a straight line from one of its ends to a distance of 200 feet at MV Fl 24. When the sphere strikes something solid or reaches its maximum distance, it bursts and fades. This does no damage except to undead affected by bright light, but it can be used to give archers light to fire by, to illuminate what lies ahead (down an alley, for instance), or as a locational signal when fired straight up into the sky.

Warriors of other realms find these powers useful, as do animal-tamers and hunters trying to bring back live animals for sale, so there has always been a brisk black market trade in stolen *peacemaker*'s

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Similar to the modern 20th-century major.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Mirt the Moneylender, a Lord of Waterdeep, holds one such ring, as revealed on page 230 of the novel *Crown of Fire*, by Ed Greenwood (TSR, Inc., 1994).



rods. Like all other Crown magic described in this appendix, it is not legal to buy, sell, or try to procure or sell a peacemaker's rod in Cormyr or its protectorates.

### War Wizard Cloak

**XP Value:** 6,000 **GP Value:** 12,000

These full-cut black weathercloaks hang to mid-boot on a wearer of average height. They are cut to overlap at the wearer's breast and shield the wearer's arms. They have high collars and separate pull-over hoods. War wizard cloaks are distinguished from fine cloaks of other make by the collar embroidery: a Purple Dragon on the left side of the collar and in the center point of the hood (so that it hangs on display to the rear) and an upraised human palm, fingers together, in a circle (picked out in white thread) on the right collar.

A war wizard cloak has all the powers of a ring of warmth. It also confers infravision on the wearer, plus the automatic protections of feather fall, ironguard, and protection from normal missiles spells. Once per day, the wearer can call on the cloak to power a sending (as the 5th-level wizard spell) and a dimension door (as the 4th-level wizard spell). Dimension door trips of up to 1,200 yards are possible.

## Passagestone

**XP Value:** 4,000 **GP Value:** 8,000

These enchanted stones are rare, though

every Crown ward in Cormyr has at least four stones linked to it: one held by Azoun, one by Vangerdahast, one stored in a vault, and one or more for the everyday use of those who have lawful business passing the ward. They are different in size and shape for each ward. Most take the shape of small pebbles that can be concealed in the palm of a woman's hand. Those used for castle armories are usually constructed much larger for security reasons, and a very few passagestones are even smaller. These last are often gemstones that are worn on rings or other adornments used by members of the royal family or set with several other ward gems on a bootstick slipped down one boot for easy transference and concealment. These bootsticks are often used by Azoun, Vangerdahast, or senior battlemasters [generals] of Cormyr.

Each *passagestone* is engraved with a rune specific to the ward it permits passage through. A *passagestone* has only two additional powers. It can emit *faerie fire* (as the spell) when willed to, allowing users to locate steps or doors in darkness when approaching or negotiating a warded area, and it protects its holder like an *ironguard* spell when willed to.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted that a passagestone could be sold for up to 25,000 if it is offered to enemies of Cormyr, the specific ward the stone is linked to is known, and the ward is important—such as a passagestone to an armory, a treasure vault, or a royal apartment in the Palace of the Purple Dragon.

 $<sup>^5</sup>$ Metal weapons pass through cloak and wearer as if they don't exist, doing no harm. See FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures or Pages From the Mages for the ironguard spell.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>See the previous note.



# Appendix IV:



lease note that the appendices of this guidebook aren't

indexed here. Also, under the Settlements & Territories heading only places mentioned in the text that don't have their own distinct entries appear.

#### Clubs

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# Dûngeons&Dragons



# Volo's Guide to CORMYR

# by Ed Greenwood

You hold in your hands the fourth popular—nay, indispensable!—travel guide penned by the indefatigable, all-seeing Volo. The tireless traveler has seen the sights of the beautiful Forest Kingdom, and he offers this pouch-sized tome so your own visit to the fabled realm of shining knights may be a carefree success. Many of the finest establishments and most striking sights and landmarks of Cormyr are featured here, ranked with the handy coin, dagger, pipe, and tankard ratings system. No visitor to Cormyr should be without this peerless guidebook.

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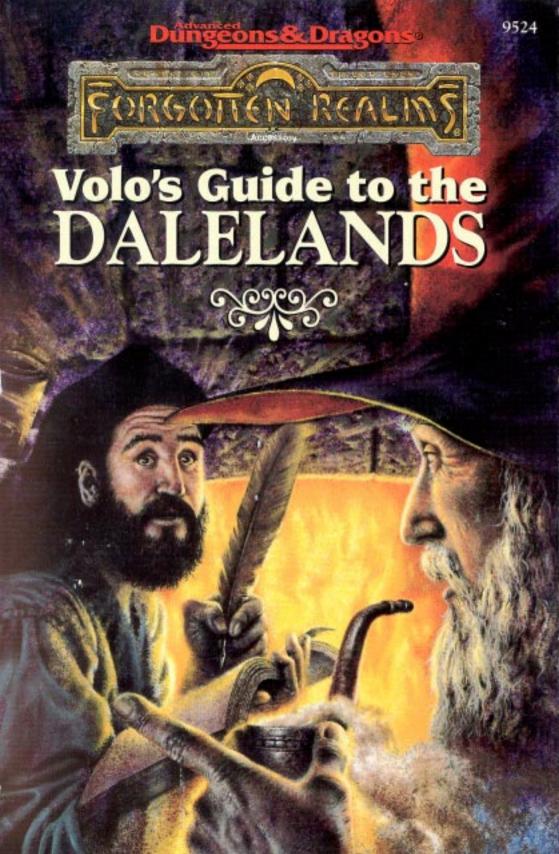
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# Volo's Guide To The Dalelands

Clippety-cloppety, bold Jonstan the Rover Rides misty-eyed down to the Dales again Into forests and fields, rare beauty all over, Land of his true loves—Aldee, Imthra, and Luthane, Elda and Myrta, Chalantha and Araine.

#### (CO)

Will he find yet another? Or be welcomed back? Long lasses aplenty catch his winking eye. Is it kisses he'll taste soon? Or scorn everlasting? Love and laughter and soon away Jonstan will fly—Cone again over threshold and under dawn sky.

#### (W)

Far across Faerûn, a rover adventures free 'Til the Dales call his heart home again To Jhaele, Sharune, Aleese and Rythree—Warm arms and hearth and a roof 'gainst rain 'Til his wandering feet bear him away again.

#### (CO)

Climbing far mountains, riding in high clover
To Waterdeep and the shores of the Shining Sea—
"Hark! Comes now bold Jonstan the Rover?
Will he, oh will he ever come back to me?"
The Dales call back the man wedded but free.

#### **@**

Clippety-cloppety, bold Jonstan the Rover Comes riding down into the Dales again. Their forests and fields, rare beauty all over, His true love more than all the maidens in pain. My man is riding mist-eyed to the Dales again.

– Jaladha Tshamryl,Minstrel of Battledale,"Jonstan the Rover"



#### Dedication

To the original Knights of Myth Drannor for first exploring the Dales at my side. Elminster salutes ve.

#### Credits

**Design:** Ed Greenwood **Editing:** Julia Martin **Cover Art:** Circulo Cabral

Interior Art: Theresa Brandon, Tony Crnkovich, Ned Dameron, and Valerie Valusek

Cartography: David Sutherland III

Typesetting: Nancy Kerkstra and Angelika Lokotz

Production: Dee Barnett

Graphic Coordination: Robert J. Galica

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## Foreword



ell met. Welcome to the fifth of my popular travel guides to regions of Faerûn. The Dalelands are a bucolic backwater known far across the Realms

for their beauty and for the tales of adventuring glory set in their forests and fields. Many folk have long desired a wayfarer's practical overview of the Dales, and that's precisely what I've endeavored to provide herein. So once again I pray to all the gods who may be disposed to smile favorably upon such efforts that your eyes also find favor with this latest work — Volo's Guide to the Dalelands.

In these pages many of the most colorful minstrels' tales have been regrettably laid aside in favor of covering features likely to be of interest or useful to the traveler—or that should bear warnings or be best avoided.

Many isolated hamlets, walled estates, ruins, and private keeps—particularly in

southwestern Battledale and along the fringes of the Elven Court—are not dealt with herein, but remain for the reader to discover. With the elven withdrawal, changes are sweeping this region, and adventure has come again to the Dales. May this guidebook bring you safely to it—or guide you in evading it, if you prefer. For ease of use, I've listed the Dales alphabetically, even places I was not able to fully explore (for reasons which will become apparent). Here are the Dales as you have never seen them before I—



Volo's Dalelands.

Elminster o Shadowdale Ahem. As usual, I've amended some of the worst distortions and untruths, but not all of them.<sup>2</sup> Some adventure is good for all of ye.

Vololhamp Seddarm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: No prizes for guessing which ones.

Volo's Ratings System			
<b>Pipes</b> (Inns)	Tankards (Taverns)	Coins (Prices)	<b>Daggers</b> (Alleyways, Courtyards, etc.)
Worst	0	*. <b>\$</b>	Unsufc
V BB	OO		BB V
Better & & &	000		Dangerous
A R R R R	0000	* * * *	BBB V
Best BBBBB	00000		JJJJ Deadly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: Nor are likely to again, unless someone else as given to exaggeration, misrepresentation, and flights of fancy happens along.



## The Dalelands

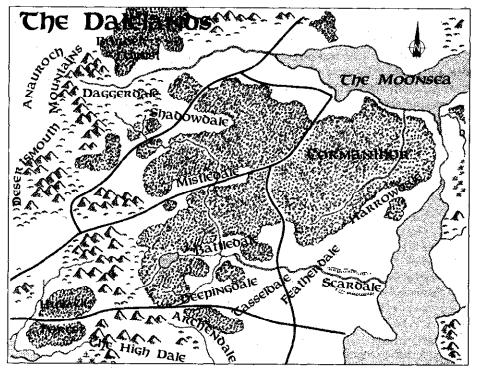


he Dalelands (called just "the Dales" by most folk who live there) are known as the Breadbasket of the Dragon Reach because of

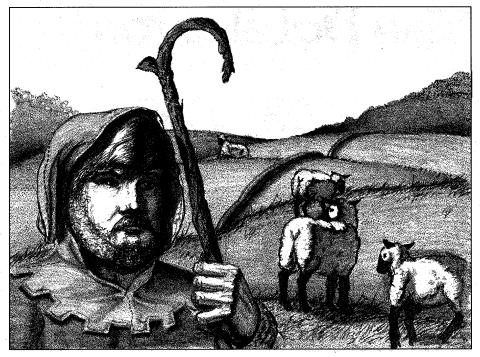
the fine and abundant food crops these small, wood-girt vales produce. One of the most beautiful, pastoral regions of Faerûn, the Dales are well worth any traveler's time—but be warned: Many a wayfarer who sees them falls hopelessly in love with their beauty and their good-natured freedom and subsequently will think of dwelling nowhere else in all the Realms.

Even folk who shrug at tales of deep elven forests, stags at bay, and verdant

farms tend to have heard of the Dales at least as "that quaint backwater where the mage Elminster dwells-in, er, Shadowdale, isn't it?" To neighboring powers such as the Zhentarim, the realms of Sembia and Cormyr, and the cities of Hillsfar and Mulmaster, the Dales are a prize worth fighting for: rich farms that each power must deny to their rivals at all costs. Azoun of Cormyr has been heard to say, "My worst nightmare is the Zhentarim casting eyes at my realm and Sembia to the east after they've got the Dales comfortably under their belts." A Sembian envoy was heard to agree that such a seizure of the Dales must never happen.







The hardy independence of the Dales-folk—notably the inhabitants of Archendale and Shadowdale—has helped to thwart the imperialistic ambitions of many of the larger, more powerful realms and city-states in the Dragon Reach and to keep the Dales free. The people of Shadowdale alone have successfully repulsed almost a dozen invasions led or sponsored by the Zhentarim.

The traveler will find in the Dales the bucolic paradise that minstrels all across Faerûn sing of and harried city folk from Westgate to Waterdeep think that all countryside, everywhere, is: a land where livestock are fat, harvests are plentiful, and rolling fields or dense forests meet the eye on all sides. The Dales hold their dangers, to be sure. As the vigilant elves have left Cormanthor, the sylvan cloak of ancient forest surrounding the

comparatively small human dale holdings, predatory beasts and long-hidden dark powers have arisen to take their places. Wayfarers are warned that even local woodcutters venture into the leafy depths only in large, well-armed parties. Bugbears, trolls, owlbears, and worse predators often skulk around the fringes of many of the Dales. Those thrifty travelers, such as the merchants of Cormyr and Sembia, who customarily save a few coins by dining at inns and then sleeping out under the stars in nearby woods may find this habit a fatal mistake when in the Dales.

Foraged food and water free for the taking are, however, both plentiful in the Dales, and travelers may even happen upon food crops gone wild in the overgrown remnants of a now-vanished Dale or abandoned hold. Deer are



plentiful—even overabundant—
throughout the Dales, and rabbit,
porcupine, woodchuck, boar, and bear
also flourish and find their ways often to
Dale tables. Many berries, edible ferns,
and mushrooms grow wild in the forest
glades, and the verdant dales themselves
produce rich harvests of wheat, oats,
barley, and all manner of vegetables.
Cattle, swine, and (increasingly) sheep are
kept by Dale farmers, and the region
produces fine cheeses, good beer; and
indifferent but cheap wines in plenty.

Even an impoverished traveler need never go hungry in the Dales. An old custom still honored in this region is the knock and bite." If a traveler raps upon a kitchen door and calls out "three copper," the cooks within open a service hatch. The traveler hands in a cup or drinking jack with the coins in it, and receives it back full of small beer and accompanied by a handwheel of cheese and a round, hard loaf of bread.

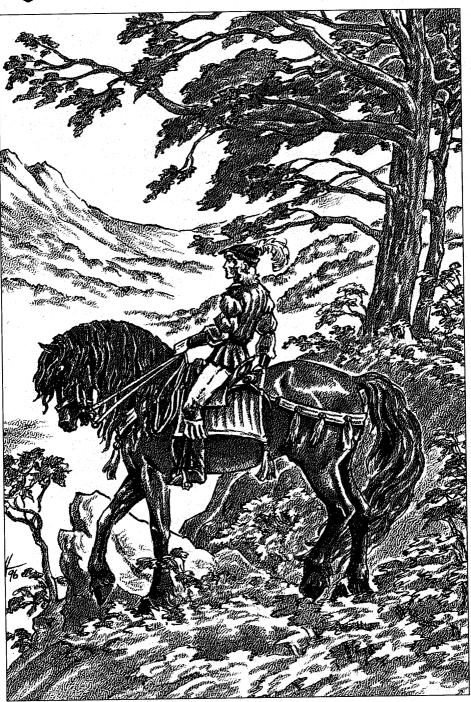
The elven presence kept human encroachment into the woods to a minimum for generations. The Elven Court woods were still home to a strong elven nation, the last remnant of the oncemighty realm of Cormanthyr, until just a score or so years ago. Woodcutting is now beginning in earnest, however. The shipbuilders of Sembia and elsewhere have their eyes on straight-standing trees larger and longer than those still standing anywhere else within easy reach of their markets that would make ideal masts for ever-larger trading vessels. The visitor is warned, however, that most Dales regard the woods around their settlements as their own property. Attempts to cut and take out timber are met with armed resistance.

One of the most fabled treasure troves in all the Realms still slumbers here in the heart of the Elven Court woods: the overgrown city of Myth Drannor. This ruined city is said to yet hold much magic, but also to be home to fearsome beasts and otherworldly monsters. Only the most mighty adventurers should dare to seek it; others find only swift death there.

The Dales hold other strange and dangerous sites, too. Many merchants ride across one whenever they travel Rauthauvyr's Road between the Standing Stone and Essembra: a wooded valley where a darkness drifts in the forest. This watchful gloom is adorned with odd drifting lights and whisperings that no one likes to camp near. Bards call this the Vale of Lost Voices and sing of the ghosts of fallen elven warriors drifting through the trees. Such ghosts are said to be on guard against the intrusions of nonelves and aided by baelnorn and more deadly, mysterious things that do not die. Many fear-filled tales about the hauntings of the Vale are told in Sembian and Moonsea taverns. and every band of scoffing adventureseekers who plunge into the Vale in search of elven jewels and magic hurries back out—white-faced and fewer in number - to add new fears to the swelling store.

When riding through sun-dappled farms and tree-girt Dale gardens, it's easy to ridicule such tales, but in the dim heart of the deep forest, the legends seem too real. The Dales are beautiful—but the traveler would do well to remember that they can be as deadly—and deserve as much respect—as the most haughty city of warriors or abode of imperious wizards.







# Archendale



nown to most as the unfriendliest and most aggressive of the Dales, Archendale<sup>1</sup> is both of those things, but it is also the

wealthiest and best-defended Dale. This sure defense makes it a secure haven for merchants, who can operate here (at least below Arch Pool) in even more safety than in Sembia. Wavfarers are warned to behave themselves when within the writ and reach of the Rides (mounted army patrols) of Archendale. The Zhentarim, several ambitious Sembian merchants. and-a century ago-the folk of rival Sessrendale can attest to the ruthless, energetic efficiency of the army of Archendale. In separate wars, this tiny holding handily hurled back the armies of all three powers-and not only wrested a treaty out of Sembia that still brings a yearly shipment of gems<sup>2</sup> from Ordulin to Archendale, but slaughtered or drove all the inhabitants of Sessrendale from their own land. The wilderness of Sessrendale, known as the Dead Dale, exists today because its soil was sewn with salt by the forces of Archendale.

Lawbreakers in this Dale can expect the same swift, sure justice as acted in these cases to descend upon them; therefore, banditry, thefts, and even fraud are almost unknown here. Be advised that any Ride captain can dispense justice in the name of the three Swords who rule Archendale. And never forget that travelers who so much as speculate aloud as to the identities of these mysterious rulers<sup>3</sup>—let alone say anything against their judgments—can expect to leave Archendale under immediate escort with some or all of any trade goods they carry forfeit!

The vigilance of both citizens and their soldiers leaves Arkhenfolk free to get on with the business of getting rich through trade—something they have always done very well. The struggling merchant seeking investors in the western Dragon Reach lands should go to Suzail and Ordulin first, but come to Archenbridge before trying the harsher, poorer sponsors of Saerloon, Selgaunt, Westgate, and Yhaunn.

## The Countryside

Archendale takes the form of a long, narrow valley, Arkhen Vale. It surrounds the gorge cut by the swift, cold River Arkhen. The gorge begins where the river cascades down out of the mountains at Arkhen Falls (a spectacular sight) and proceeds along the river's southeasterly run between the Marching Mountains (as this southwestern arm of the Thunder Peaks range is sometimes called) and the Arch Wood. The valley flanks the gorge and spreads out a day's ride in all directions from the Dale's only town, Archenbridge.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>prime}$  Volo: Archendale is pronounced "ARK-hen-dale," by the way. Visitors who say "ARCH-en-dale" are hooted at.  $^{2}$  Worth at least 300,000 gold pieces!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For who these Swords really are, see Dheren Ogresbane, Jalia Mossgreen, and Alduvar Snowbrand in Appendix I.



Archenbridge stands at the mouth of Arkhen Vale and is named for the bridge that carries the Dawnpost, which links Daerlûn and Ordulin through the rural Sembian backlands, across the Arkhen.

Before the Dale grew prosperous, the lower end of Arkhen Vale was all farms, and the upper end was rocky and largely deserted sheep grazing land. Today, few trees are to be found below Arch Pool, a small pond where the river waters spill down a few rapids and the crowded homes, gardens, and shops of the Arkhenfolk begin. Most farms in the Dale today are little more than large private gardens. Almost all the Dalesfolk make their living at some sort of skilled craft, from gemcutting to woodcarving, or as the wealthiest folk in Sembia do: through investments.

The waters of Arch Pool are open to all, and visitors are encouraged to water their mounts and camp on its upper shore. Caravans and people coming to trade in Archenbridge must rent paddock space and accommodations in Archenbridge, however. No visitors are allowed to settle or build any structures above Arch Pool, and the only buildings above the pond are farmers' cottages, several hilltop strongholds used by the Rides (and usually occupied by bored sentries keeping watch for grass fires and monsters on the prowl), and the walled village of White Ford.

The Arkhen gorge is steep-sided. Although a few foot tracks wind up its slippery rock walls into Arch Wood and the mountains, the only trails into or out of the valley that a mounted man or a wagon can traverse are at Archenbridge and White Ford. Good roads run along both sides of the banks of the Arkhen for

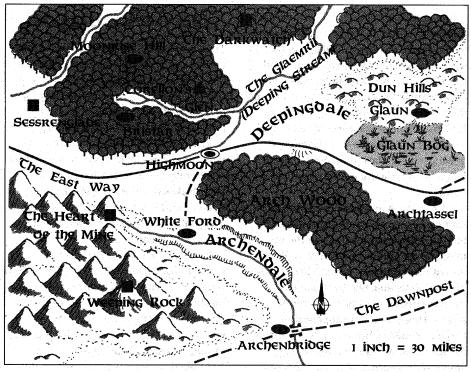
most of the length of the Vale. Save where people have built or tilled, the valley floor of the upper Vale is a misty area of ferns, mosses, shrubs, and small waterfalls that bring the many springs that rise from the sides of the valley down from pool to pool to join the river. The half-elven minstrel Thalaeva Rynthar of Elventree called the upper reaches of Archendale "perhaps the most beautiful landscape east of Evereska—much too good for those greedy, churlish Arkhenfolk."

The largest and most beautiful waterfall in all the Dales is Arkhen Falls. Here a spring bursts from the top of Mount Thalagbror (a peak named for a long-dead ogre mage who once dwelt in a cave somewhere on its eastern flank) and crashes for hundreds of feet down the always-wet mountainside to begin its 60-mile run to Archenbridge. Legend insists that pegasi dance and frolic around the falling water, but I've never seen any despite several visits to this isolated spot.<sup>4</sup>

On either side of Arkhen Vale stand what some elder Arkhenfolk call "the Walls of Night" because they block the early rays of the morning sun and hasten the gloom of night: Arch Wood and the Marching Mountains. Few folk in presentday Archendale know the mountain trails or have ever ventured up into their monster-haunted height, and almost as few have ever entered the dense forest that forms the other flank of Archendale. The Arch Wood is a dark, thick wall of shadowtop, duskwood, ash, oak, and elm trees haunted by owlbears and bearing a fell reputation. Old elven ruins and rumored mage tombs lie within the dense woods, but those who go looking for them rarely

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Volo may not, but he lacks something of the soul of a poet. I have seen pegasi—and unicorns, nymphs, nereids, and winged maidens besides.





come out again. If the planned cutting of timber in Arch Wood proceeds as briskly as some Arkhenfolk desire, some of these lost sites will be cut out of the forest into the easy reach of all.

Below Arch Pool, the well-ordered countryside presents a vista of gently sloping tilled fields divided by hedgerows that have grown up around rows of heaped stones. Children here learn to use their slings swiftly and surely when very young to bring down birds for use in hearth pies and to keep the avians from plundering seeds or crops. Their elders make sure that not a foot of ground is wasted.

Amid these neat and fertile farms stand the hamlets of Lady's Belt, Nairning, and Ramblecoats, places which offer farmers' markets and farm supplies stores. All lodgings in these farmlands are safe, clean, and enjoyable, but there is little of particular interest to the outlander hereabouts except horses: Fine riding mounts are bred around Lady's Belt. All else can be had more cheaply in Archenbridge, where competition is fiercer. Most visitors to the farmlands of Archendale are passing through to White Ford and the lands beyond or are adventurers trying their luck in the mountain mines or in Arch Wood.

Of old, there was much copper and gem mining in the peaks above the gorge of the River Arkhen, especially around Arkhen Falls. Monsters have always made mining dangerous in the area, and yields from the delvings have grown 'more and more paltry with the passing years, so the miners have grown fewer among Arkhenfolk.



Outlander adventurers, however, have increased in the region since Sembia was founded, the elves grew quiet, and the roads opened up. Every year more and more folk visit Archendale in hopes of making their fortunes. They are drawn by tales of caches of elven finery and Sembian merchant treasuries hidden in the many natural caverns and abandoned delvings of the Marching Mountains by folk who did not live to return and claim them.

The most vivid stories of mining in Archendale center on the Sparkling Stones, caverns somewhere in the mountains above Arkhen Vale whose walls glitter with thousands of gems. These caves are said to be guarded by a clan of dwarves driven mad by the riches they guard. These dwarves supposedly seek to slay all intruders, but they may let some escape or even toss them fist-sized gemstones out of insane whimsy. Many folk claim to have seen these shining deeps and escaped through such dwarven folly-but I've never found any storytellers who look any the richer for their adventures.<sup>5</sup> It is certain, however, that crag sheep, vultures, and wyverns lair in the high fastnesses of the Marching Mountains, and that hobgoblins and worse creatures sometimes raid miners and isolated holds in the upper Vale.

## The Arkhenfolk

Those who dwell in Archendale are a difficult, haughty people who regard most other Dalesfolk as backward, rustic simpletons; Sembians as spineless, lazy fops; and most other outlanders as unscrupulous vagabonds. It has been said they only respect hardy folk who see to their own needs and keep quiet, good gardeners (as most of them venerate Chauntea, She Who Makes the Stones Themselves Growl—and those more ruthless, mighty, and swift in battle than the 60-strong Bides of Archendale.

Arkhenfolk sneer at adventurers who come to their Dale seeking treasure and have a rich supply of hearty tavern tales based on the idiotic deeds of this or that band of adventuring fools.<sup>6</sup> They make steady coin guiding and equipping such bands, however, and do not bar or hamper their activities so long as these visitors do not dig or pry about in the inhabited areas of the Dale. Several successful families of Archendale-notably the Baulaukiirs, the Ithrymm, and the Tantals—are reputed to guard the riches they have won outdoing Sembian merchants at trade in treasure caches hidden in vaults and burial crypts under their grand family homes in Archenbridge.7

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster: My, my! Such trenchant cynicism in one so young. I have seen the Sparkling Stones and the dwarves who dwell there, though the dwarves would not speak of their lineage to a human. I have also seen some of the gems brought out—including emeralds as big as grapefruit. The tales are true (or almost all true), but overeager adventurers are warned that the dwarves are far more fond of reckless, homicidal rages than tossing out gems as handouts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: My favorite is the one about the warrior from Mulmaster who leapt onto the back of a roosting wyvern. As it flew high and wild above the Vale trying to twist and bite him, he calmly slew it, thinking he could glide safely and gently to earth after it perished. Instead he ended up as flat as a mudpie beneath it when it crashed to earth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>On the subject of buried riches, adventurers are warned that Archendale has a law that visitors never seem to learn about until too late: The Rides that patrol the Vale have strict orders to dig up anything buried by any outlander—and confiscate it if it is of value. Jokes told elsewhere—not anywhere near Archendale—speak about Arkhenfolk digging up latrines to make sure no coins are lurking among the leavings.



Many folk in other Dales describe Arkhenfolk as "difficult" or employ less polite phrases. One example of the hard character of the folk of Archendale is of current interest: Large-scale logging has begun in Arch Wood despite protests from Deepingdale and Tasseldale, both of whom have resorted to hiring bands of adventurers to harry the loggers after Archendale ignored their envoys and went so far as to send Battledale a bill for "our good time wasted" listening to an envoy sent from that Dale to protest the logging. In Archendale's stated view, Battledale "and other remote locales" have no right to even speak about matters concerning Arch Wood.

This was not a view shared widely at the last meeting of the Dales Council. Archendale agreed to at least discuss the concerns of other Dales—while the logging continues, mind you - after the archmage Elminster arrived unannounced to address the Council. He rather grumpily pronounced that if the good folk of Archendale were not even going to listen to envoys, he would use his magic to render all Arkhenfolk deaf so they could not hear anything else, either! When a minor Arkhen mage openly doubted the Old Mage's ability to do this, Elminster obligingly demonstrated on the overconfident mage on the spot, restoring his hearing by some arcane means when the Sword representing Archendale at the meeting protested.

Ride captains in Archendale are said to be paying 25 gold pieces to anyone

who suggests a good—and feasible—means of humiliating Elminster of Shadowdale. (It is reported that both the Old Mage and the Simbul, Queen of Aglarond, have claimed this reward by making suggestions while in disguise and then revealed their true forms upon payment.) Apparently in response to this bounty, a glowing, floating scroll has often appeared at the Standing Stone this past season. When unrolled, it bears the title "List of Humble Folk in Archendale," but is otherwise blank. It promptly fades away when read to reappear to another traveler on a later occasion.

A persistent and totally unvalidated rumor in the Dragon Reach is that one of the Swords of Archendale is a woman who was once the consort of the Royal Wizard of Cormyr, Vangerdahast. The chief reason, then, that Sembia-whose more ambitious merchants often cast covetous eves on the riches of Arkhen Vale-has never conquered Archendale is that the war wizards of Cormyr (at Vangerdahast's command) will bring in a defending Purple Dragon army by magic should Sembia ever mount a large-scale invasion.8 Different Sembian forces have initiated small incursions over the years, but never succeeded at an invasion. However, given that Archendale's actions in Sessrendale and in the Dales Council have left it without allies among the Dales, a large Sembian force could hardly fail to smash the Dale's relatively small defending army. As a saying known across the Realms goes: "If a Arkhen man dies, no one cries."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Vangerdahast (relayed by Elminster): Poppycock. Pure twaddle. As if I would ever let my personal life sway kingdom policy, even if it were true.



## Archenbridge

This busy town of more than 1,200 folk is the center of Archendale. A cluster of stone buildings with slate or tile roofs, Archenbridge has always outgrown its successively larger walls, sprawling along the overland road that its bridge carries across the River Arkhen. Its center is as cramped and as bustling as a ward of Waterdeep, with wagons rumbling up and down its cobbled streets at all hours and every building rising at least three floors above ground level. (A typical Archenbridge squarehouse has a shop or storage cellar below ground, a shop at street level, offices or rental storage above that, and one or more floors of residences crowning all.) Excepting the grand houses of nobles and retired gentry, only Essembra in all the Dales boasts private buildings of such height.

#### Landmarks

The River Arkhen flows swiftly through town, powering both a grist mill and a sawmill. The grist mill is Heward's Mill, operated by the greedy and uncouth Salath Heward, and the sawmill is Sandan's Sawmill, run by Sandan himself, an always-calm retired Ride captain who notices everything and works with slow, deliberate care. The cold, swift Arkhen also affords fishing and boating pleasure to the wealthy folk who dwell in the newly built manor houses along the River Way, the town's most exclusive district. At least one of these manor houses - Whiteturrets, owned by Marler Chandrar of Fairwind Street-can be rented by the tenday or the month by exclusive guests or for parties. (A tenday costs 50 gp per person in winter and 75 gp per head between

Greengrass and the Festival of the Moon. A month costs 120 gp or 300 gp, with the same seasonal variance.)

These grand houses are separated from the sprawl of the ever-expanding town by the trees of Grave Hollow, a glen with a grass-covered barrow hill at its heart. The Hollow is used by citizens of all ages who like to dine at highsun under the open sky and at night by young Arkhenfolk in love—or those who wish to conduct secretive business. (Be warned: The Swords send soft-footed undercover agents patrolling the Hollow at night to listen and learn all they can.)

Rental paddocks (for caravan assembly and the use of visiting merchants) and the market field also restrict the growth of the town. Increasingly, businesses whose trade requires a large workplace and storage area, such as wagonmakers and stonemasons, are maintaining only offices in town and locating their main shops in walled compounds just within sight of the town. They trust, as the lordlings of the manor houses along River Way do, in the readiness of the town garrison in the frowning stone keep of Swordpoint. This old fortress, the largest castle in the Dales, overlooks the town and the West Road leading up into the farmlands and thence the length of the Dale to distant White Ford.

Two large temples lie parallel to each other in the heart of Archenbridge, almost facing each other: the Bounty of the Goddess, dedicated to Chauntea, and the Glory of the Morning, consecrated to Lathander. The homes and shops of the haughty citizens of Archenbridge crowd around these two tall, spired buildings. The only other notable place of worship in Archenbridge is the Shrine of Swords.



which honors Tempus. It stands in the forecourt of Swordpoint.

Several merchant costers are based in town, and every other shopkeeper in Archenbridge has a secret source or three in Sembia. Somewhere in town the traveler can find almost anything. In this guide I have noted only a few outstanding establishments, and separate entries for the most interesting sights follow.

#### Places of Interest in Archenbridge Unique Sites Grave Hollow

The encircling trees and central grassy hill (where no trees will grow) of the "Haunted Hollow" would be a pleasant enough campground for travelers were it not for all the local traffic. Grave Hollow is a picnic place for townspeople, the site of many lovers' trysts and clandestine (well, shady) meetings—and also, locals swear, haunted ground. A terrible curse awaits anyone who digs in the hill, and moaning spirits fly about whenever fire is kindled or turf is dug in the Hollow.

Owners of the grand mansions along River Way encourage fearful rumors about the Hollow to keep traveling hireswords and other undesirables from camping at their back gates. Sword agents patrol the Hollow, eavesdropping on folk there, but do not confront or evict them unless they discover battle, torture, murder, or obvious kidnapping or dealing in stolen goods in progress.

Though visitors are told the Hollow is the grave of an unknown warrior, the truth about Grave Hollow, I have learned, (in consultation with a very senior Harper agent<sup>9</sup>) is that the hill is the tomb of an elven tribe poisoned by rivals a long time (thousands of years) ago. They were laid to rest with their belongings by gnomes who feared that keeping any magic or garb of the dead would bring misfortune, so a lot of ancient elven magic must await anyone who can break into the barrow.

Many have tried to break in and failed. At least four baelnorn (undead elven mages) sit unsleeping in the bone-filled darkness inside the hill. They are able to use all the magical items of their peopleand at least two spells of awesome power: The first creates the flying phantoms, who soar up out of the earth to swoop and moan, chilling beings who dig, burn, or use any magic to scry or penetrate into the hill. The second instantly enacts a powerful curse on all who persist in trying to pry loose the hill's secrets after a phantom<sup>10</sup> has visited them. The curse is a year-long ironguard effect that cannot be dispelled. 11 The cursed person cannot touch any metal, from coins to armor - all such things just fall through them!

#### Temples

#### The Bounty of the Goddess

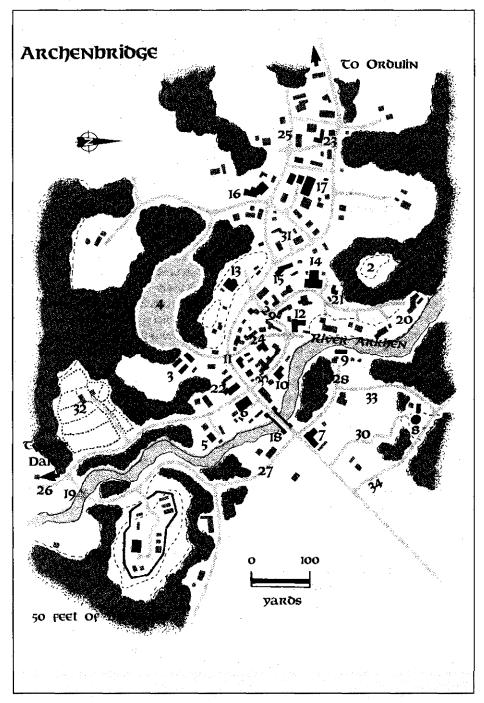
Despite the aggressively expanding businesses of Archenbridge, veneration of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Elminster: He hired someone to ask me!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Elminster: In AD&D® game terms, the spirits of the Hollow are identical to wraiths, save that their single touch attack harms living beings as a *chill touch* spell instead of draining life energy. Typically one spirit appears for each being on the hill at the time someone's deeds cause their appearance. Their moaning has no harmful effect.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Elminster: There is a way to dispel the curse, by the way—but I'll leave its discovery to those idiotic enough to incur it. I will tell ye it's different than the solution to the similar curse inflicted by the baelnorn of Hunter's Down in Deepingdale.





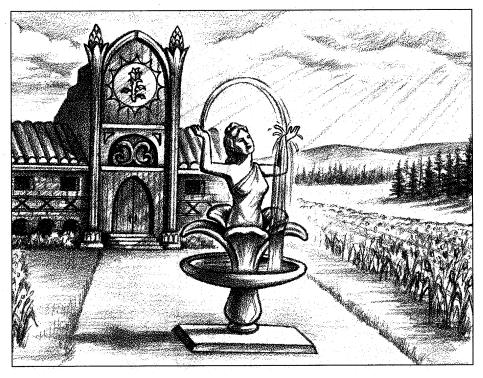


### Archenbridge Map Key

- Swordpoint (army barracks) and the Shrine of Swords (shrine consecrated to Tempus)
- **2.** Grave Hollow (park and haunted locale)
- 3. Stersen's Paddock (horse trader)
- 4. Market field
- 5. Sandan's Sawmill
- 6. Old Stonebows (inn)
- 7. The Black Horse (inn)
- **8.** Orosul's Tower (abandoned residence of the mage Orosul)
- 9. Heward's Mill (grist mill)
- **10.** Elgath's Provisions (shop)
- 11. The Drunken Lion (tavern)
- **12.** Jendalath's Fine Fruits (shop)
- **13.** The Glory of the Morning (temple of Lathander)
- **14.** The Bounty of the Goddess (temple of Chauntea)
- **15.** Mirksha, Mirksha, & Mirksha (shop and trading coster head-quarters)
- **16.** The Stone Crab Coster (shop and trading coster headquarters)
- **17.** The Darkwater Brand (shop and trading coster headquarters)
- 18. The Arkhen Bridge
- 19. Arkhen Ford
- 20. River Way
- 21. Whiteturrets (rentable manor)
- 22. The Old Dragon Down (shop)
- 23. The Bridge and Bow (tavern)
- 24. Fairwind Street
- 25. Pelter's Street
- 26. West Road
- 27. Forge Lane
- **28.** Watersluice Way
- **29.** The Butcherbar (street)
- 30. Ummer's Amble (street)
- 31. Deepwell Court
- 32. Dorn's Rental Paddocks
- 33. Drovers' Lane
- 34. Spindral Street
- 35. Urserpent Street







Chauntea still outweighs that of all other deities worshiped in Archendale. Her local temple consists of a magnificent facade—an arched door between two towers carved to look like giant growing stalks of wheat—mated to a gigantic tithe barn. In the barn, plants are grown and prayers to the goddess are performed kneeling on tilled earth amid the smells and sights of growing crops.

The Mother of All Flowers is served in Archenbridge by an ambitious High Harvestmaster, Thaliach Mindogar, <sup>12</sup> and four lesser clerics. Under his guidance, the church has turned from the "stolid, but stodgy" faith in town to an influential power—largely through investing

shrewdly in local businesses in return for services, favors, and allegiances.

Visitors are directed to the fountain in the forecourt, whose waters are blessed thrice daily. These holy waters may be purchased by anyone of any faith for 25 gp/vial, or only 20 if the purchaser can prove primary devotion to Chauntea or is a visiting clergy member. The fountain, sculpted by the famous dwarven mason Feldyn Fullbellow, aesthetically and regally depicts the All-Mother as a buxom, nigh-unclad woman emerging from the opening petals of a gigantic flower. Water sprays from one of her spread hands in an arc to fall into the other and be drained

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>AD&D game details of this priest and the other high clergy of Archenbridge can be found in Appendix I of this work. Consult this alphabetical (by first name, as many Faerûnian folk lack a surname) appendix whenever you encounter a person of note in the pages of this guide.



away, symbolizing the cycle of water in all life.

In Archenbridge it is said that if a priest of Chauntea is slain in Arkhen Vale, the waters of the fountain turn to blood for a day. The touch of that blood purges diseases and unnatural conditions of the body—including the effects of fungi and molds, mummy rot, lycanthropy, and withering—and make barren or even salt-sewn earth fertile. Please be aware that my notation of this tale here is not a suggestion that the reader should test this belief

#### The Glory of the Morning

This holy house was recently enlarged to house more wealth, more priests, and more workshops where the faithful can work on various inventions and artistic creations. The traveler can readily find the Gloryhouse, as locals call it, by looking for the slender, tapering tower of white granite that soars up from the heart of this temple. This tower is surmounted by a beacon where priests add certain powders to fires to create pink smoke during major rituals. The tower can be seen from miles away when the sunlight catches itand thanks to the natural propensity of wyverns to investigate any lofty pinnacle or other feasible nesting site, temple guards armed with blasting magic are now stationed on its heights at all times!

The accent in the Gloryhouse is on practical advice and aid. At all hours, a devotee of Lathander can speak with priests and lay worshipers who are familiar with either mechanics or trade customs and routes in Sembia and the Dales. These Lathanderians can give accurate advice on the feasibility of a planned business venture or an innovative item. This

counsel and the use of the temple workshops are free to those who worship Lathander and cost a nominal amount (5 gp per session for counseling, 5 gp per day for use of a workshop) for those who follow other faiths.

The temple personnel can also be hired to assist in a new venture by anyone of any faith, though they leave this service if asked to destroy or slay rather than nurture or build. The temple rarely gives financial support to entrepreneurs. Instead, it loans the faithful of Lathander sufficient funds to build new things or establish new services and ventures.

The Glory of the Morning's high priestess is Light of Lathander Mornmaster Stellaga Brightstar, and her senior clergy are Hand of Lathander High Morninglord Orblin Storntar, a giant of a man who says little but sees all, and Dawnmasters Alguuna, Rassauva, Shirrye, and Tosstra, who are known as the "four ladies" locally. Eleven other clergy members serve under Stellaga's leadership. The successful judgment and diligence of Mornmaster Stellaga Brightstar and her clergy has done much not only to enrich the temple and cause its faith to swell in local popularity, but to make Lathanderians all over Sembia take note of hitherto unknown Archendale. At the same time Stellaga's efforts have brought to the Dale a standard of living surprisingly high and sophisticated for such a small, roughmining, even warlike place. Services normally available only in much larger centers can be had in Archenbridge such as the rehilting and blade-tinting of swords, for instance, or gemcutting to match existing stones in a jewelry setting-thanks to the support and guidance of the well-liked local folk of Glory.



#### The Shrine of Swords

This slim-spired building stands in the center courtyard of Swordpoint (itself covered in more detail in the pages that follow) and presents the shape of an open-faced, spired helm to visitors. It is painted black, but this coating is always flaking off thanks to the rust beneath it: The spire and front arch of the shrine are fashioned entirely of interwoven and hammered swords, shields, and armor captured in battle by worshipers.

Inside, the shrine is sparsely and simply furnished and only enough clergy members to provide the basics. The shrine has sleeping cots for pilgrims and is staffed by two lay servants and Battle-Chaplain Gordon Stakaria, the scarred veteran warrior who serves as Swordmaster of the Shrine. Stakaria is a stern, close-mouthed sort, but he is always willing to trade information with anyone of any faith who brings him news of battle from anywhere on Faerûn. Getting healing potions out of him is not so easy.

#### Shops

#### The Darkwater Brand

Weapons, Armor, Metalware, and Caravan Shipping

5 5 5 5

This large, well-guarded establishment is the best local source of weapons, armor, shields, and metalwares. Its owners sell a lot of buckles, nails, scabbard caps, hand lamps, hooks, and spikes. All of these items come from Glister, Thentia, Melvaunt, and other Moonsea sources. Darkwater Brand agents purchase Archendale ore and vegetables to trade for all the metal goods. The Brand maintains outposts in Hillsfar and Ordulin.

Persistent rumors recount that the Darkwater Brand is involved in slaving, smuggling, and hiding fugitives from the justice of Cormyr, Hillsfar, and Sembia. The Dakkar family certainly does not welcome inquiries into its activities and keeps a lot of well-armed and equipped warriors on its payroll-but the Dakkars explain these unsavory hireswords and the Brand's ownership of carts fitted with cages, small catapults, or multiple mounted crossbows as necessary for their sideline of escorting valuable overland mercantile cargoes (such as captive monsters) and providing bodyguard services to merchants and travelers in the region.

Most folk who have dealt with the Brand say that their prices are stiff, but the merchandise is the best. Expect blades to be oiled and nails to be straight and meticulously inspected in the shop. Arkhenfolk insisted to me that the shop has some sort of invisible guardian creature that hunts down would-be thieves.

#### The Old Dragon Down

Relics of Myth Drannor, Minor Magical Knickknacks, and Pawnshop

5 5 5 5

This intriguingly named shop sells relics of Myth Drannor, odd items of beauty or that bear minor enchantments, and salvaged gear from dead adventurers, tombs, and the like. (The magical gewgaws include such items as lamps that glow without fuel, for instance, or cloaks that float in the air by themselves without need of a peg when placed and commanded that can also be stretched out horizontally to serve as small fly tents



against rain without fear of them blowing away.) The cramped, dimly lit Down also serves as a pawnshop. It is much frequented by adventurers down on their luck and by folk with just a few coins who want to hire such rough folk for small, shady services (such as scaring rivals or small thefts) or who are not wealthy enough to afford Darkwater Brand bodyguards and need a short-term escort or champion.

The name and signboard of the shop recall and depict the legendary slaying of Arkhenthus, a gigantic white dragon who once dwelt in Arkhen Vale. He was laid low in the days of Myth Drannor's glory by six human and elven warriors employing only swords and flight magic—if you can believe the minstrels' tales.<sup>13</sup> Around back one can usually find several warriors swapping even wilder stories as they wait to be hired.

# Taverns The Bridge and Bow

This quiet alehouse is well hidden down a side alley off Pelter's Street and is where the locals go when they would like to relax and talk without a lot of noise, crowding, or rowdiness. The Bow (locals will not know what you are talking about if you refer to this place as "the Bridge") serves a good selection of ales, stouts, and sherries, and one can also get a light meal here. Salted fish, sausage, and melted herbed cheese are available, accompanied by parsley and buttered bread. Five sp buys

you a platter of whatever you fancy. A "Liggins" (named after a former proprietor) is all of the menu items cooked together on a slab of hot bread with the cheese melted over everything like a glue.

The Bow has a meeting room with its own entrance on the floor above the taproom. The room has a closet that allows one to climb down a ladder into the cellars and thence go to either the sewer (which empties straight into the Arkhen, except during the spring run, when the river empties straight into the cellar!) or back up into the taproom by way of the privy passage. The meeting room is hung with thick, plush tapestries and has double walls to make it very private.

The meeting room can be rented for 25 gp/evening, a price which includes a handkeg of beer and a large decanter of wine. It has its own jakes, two dozen mismatched but comfortable chairs, and a huge meeting table.

#### The Drunken Lion

## !! DD 1111

This rough, sparsely and rudely furnished alehouse is where Ridesmen, shepherds from updale, loggers, trappers, and poor travelers go to slake their thirsts. It is crowded and smoky, and fights often break out. Those who like seeing rather unattractive performers dance on tables while wearing very little clothing are advised that the management maintains a staff of dancers for this purpose—and that they usually perform when a distraction from a fight is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Elminster: Not believe that I helped slay Arkhenthus the Mage-Devourer? Not believe? Does this young cynic think only his generation had any heroes? How does he think anyone survived to father him? Aye, there were six of us, and we used only swords—though as I recall, at least two of those blades were spellswords.



needed to prevent the eruption of a general brawl.

The best-looking of the dancers, a halfelven woman who uses the name Jalandyl o' Stars, is *very* accurate with hurled flagons and the leg-tangling weapon known as "bolas." Over the years, she has often felled folk who tried to leave without paying or take goods that did not belong to them. She is rumored to be one of the owners of the Lion, though the fat, unsmiling alemaster, Meerkun, refuses to confirm this.

The traveler is further warned that the worst sort of folk patronize this house of cheap drink. Those who start fights deliberately are often served sleeping-potion-laced ale and carted into back rooms to be relieved of valuables before being dumped into the Arkhen and revived.

One can get ale, wine, zzar, hard biscuits, and handwheels of strong but often wormy cheese at the Lion. A draft costs 4 cp, and a flagon of cheap wine only 2 sp. My advice: If you can get up and stagger elsewhere for your food, do so.

### lnns The Black Horse

iii baaa

To find the Black Horse, seek the large, black, iron "striding horse" signboard that has been forge-mended so many times that the horse looks like it suffers from giant warts! This always-busy, rambling complex of old houses is the solid, low-budget lodging in town. Prospectors, farm hired hands, drovers, hireswords, woodcutters, and adventurers all stay at the Horse because it is cheap and clean. It costs 6 sp per night for a private sleeping cubicle (with bed, doorbar, and chamberpot), 1 cp extra for a

lamp, 1 cp more for an ewer of water suitable for both bathing and drinking (the grizzled old man who brings it advises you to keep those two activities in the proper order), 1 sp for a bath, and 2 sp more if you want some hot water in the bath. All meals are purchased in addition to those standard fees: A meal of "whatever's going" (usually rabbit pie or manyfowl stew) costs 1 sp, and a tankard of Archenwood Stout runs 5 cp.

The Horse provides nothing fancy but is easy on the purse. The popularity of its operating credo is shown by its continual expansion into adjoining shops and houses. One new feature is rentable strongcellar rooms: small closets for 2 gp per night or 7 gp per tenday, and larger lock rooms for 6 gp per night or 15 gp per tenday

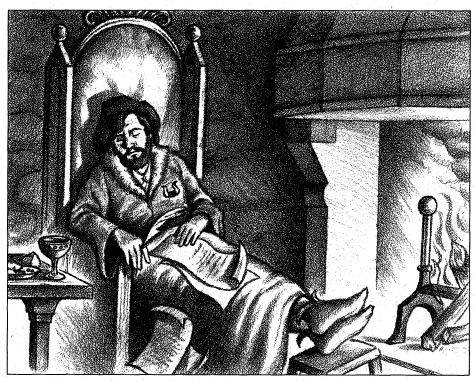
The master of the house is Sardan Alander, a cheerful sort who recalls faces and names for 40 years or more. The formidably fat chatelaine, Alyth "Elbows" Junter, heads a staff of honest chambermaids who leap on dirt or beetles as if they were hated foes on a battlefield. They can bring food to rooms for shy or injured patrons. Tip them well (2 sp at least for the maid who does your room on a long stopover or 1 sp if you stay only a night); they deserve it.

#### **Old Stonebows**



Far and away the best accommodation in all Archendale, this cozy inn is known as "Jalia's" to locals after its owner and host, Jalia Mossgreen. An imposing place of thick stone walls and dark, well-polished wood paneling throughout, this inn has a fireplace in every room, wardrobes, comfortable chairs that some patrons prefer





to beds for sleeping in, and a communal, always-available hot bathing pool in the cellar, reached by a creaking, staff-cranked elevator.

Each guest is provided with a large, fluffy robe embroidered with the inn's badge (a pair of curving golden bull's horns) for wearing down to the pool, but the shy are warned that all guests disrobe and plunge in together. The robes are very handsome, but not for sale, and Jalia's been known to send bounty hunters after guests who somehow absentmindedly packed them in with their own gear before leaving. Scented soaps are free for the using in the pool, and an especially luxurious touch is the serving of hot (in winter) or cold (in summer) drinks at pool's edge to bathers.

The atmosphere in this place is one of

quiet, comfortable, and a trifle worn luxury. The hallmarks of the Stonebows are the silent tolerance of eccentricities and special travelers' needs on the part of the staff and the superb food: Hot soups, roast venison, and spiced fowl offered with an array of sauces (from crushed berries through juiced and peppered cucumber) can be had at any hour after, it seems, a wait of only a few breaths. An extensive menu of smoked fish, roast boar, and similar delicacies is added to this during daylight hours, (The river eel platter and the quail in wine are particularly fine.) All meals are 9 gp a head, so it pays to eat heartily but seldom. Drinks are extra. Be warned that some dishes are salty enough to make enthusiastic diners drain as many as four tankards before their platters are empty!



## Elgath's Provisions

Overland Traveling Gear Shop

5 5 5 5

This expensive<sup>14</sup> but very well stocked shop on Urserpent Street in eastern Archenbridge is a must-visit site for those in need of rope, maps, tents, packs, sledges, rations, and all other manner of overland traveling gear. Established for the mining trade, it now serves mostly adventurers and merchants—and is notable for what haunts it.

#### The Place

This shop has an unassuming entry. A shopper must traverse a long, narrow stretch of food shelves all around the outer walls to reach the much larger back room of the shop. Most provender is sold in Elgath's specialty: corked bottles packed into wooden no-break frames that were filled with wet clay, and have dried into very sturdy travel containers. In the back room one finds river skiffs slung from the rafters, suits of armor and barding, carts, and a full-sized nine-runner merchants' sleigh.

Everything is clean, well-lit, and very well organized; the staff can find what you want—if they have it—in a trice. Dusting to maintain the cleanliness goes on constantly, aided by a very clever cart-and-lofty-ladder affair that small children armed with mops and swab cloths swarm up and down like Chultan jungle monkeys. The cheery lighting is provided by some skylights and hanging lamps. Two discreet notices on posts in the shop warn thieves that the glass high overhead is not unguarded.

I have heard trail tales of folk bursting into the shop closely pursued by rivals or Ridesmen, buying a disguise or weapons at the full run, and emerging out the back door of the shop with their purchase ready to use without ever slowing. If such stories are true—and I am assured of their veracity by several Arkhen citizens, the staff must be fit and efficient indeed!

#### The Prospect

This is perhaps the best small outfitters shop I have yet seen in Faerûn-certainly it is the best I have seen in a small town, and the best organized anywhere. The bluff, sleekly unshaven owner, Elgath, usually sits at ease in a chair chatting with other retired Ridesmen while his staff waits on customers-but he'll gladly leap up to assist if need be. (He was badly injured in Archendale's service and parlayed his retirement gold into this superb shop.) He cheerfully admits that most buyers find his preprepared rations a bit bland, but he does sell several hot sauces and salty fish-spice pastes for use in making things more interesting. His rations are prepared, he says, to make them last as long as possible, not to make gourmets

Elgath's boast is that if he does not have an item of gear, he will find out where it can be found within the day. On the one occasion I put this nocharge service to the test, wanting a Thayan web-of-bells dancers' costume, Elgath came through before the next meal of the day. He located a Sembian collector who was willing to sell a spare

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Add 10% to all *Player's Handbook* prices, rounding odd amounts upward.



costume and offered to send a fast rider for it. I declined, as it was not my size or, well, shape.

#### Travelers' Lore

Some travelers encounter just one minor problem with buying needed goods from this otherwise superior establishment. A wizard is said to haunt the place—or rather, as he is not dead, to lurk among its neatly arranged wares. This mage, one Thendarion of Tsurlagol by name, lost a spell duel some 80 years ago and was imprisoned in the shape of a boot. Like a peltast, he can now take the shape of any nonliving object of roughly the same volume. His favorite forms, I'm told, are a lantern or a coil of rope.

This ability is apparently something Thendarion gained by modification of the spells in his mind—which, in a side-effect of the magic which entrapped him, he cannot forget. Thus, though he cannot acquire any new spells, he can cast his familiar magical roster over and over again.

How he came to the shop—which is only a little more than two decades old—is a mystery. Unsurprisingly, the Wizard of the Boot is something Elgath does not want to talk about. I gather he has hired several mages to rid himself of this nuisance over the years, and for all his coins has gotten exactly nowhere.

Thendarion is a nuisance because he is bored beyond sanity by his existence as a boot and tries to get himself bought by adventurers so he can go along for the fun. He usually tries to use his spells to help his new owners, but the results are often unpredictable.

Though he can emit spell effects by will whenever he desires and in whatever form he is in, these magics are often twisted awry by the enchantment that imprisons him. Thus, an attempt to create magical light may result in a nearby tree turning blue, bursting into flame, or being transformed into a silvery shower of gasping, flapping fish. The two spells that still serve Thendarion unerringly are his shape change and teleport—which he uses to return to the shop when he tires of adventurers or they tire of adventures or life or him and behave accordingly.

So if you or a friend happen to purchase a lamp at Elgath's shop that seems to turn into a knife or coil of rope when you need such things, and strange magic seems to erupt when you go into battle, you have probably bought Thendarion. If Thendarion is returned, Elgath will refund the purchase price in full, politely but unhappily. He then will probably ask if you or any colleagues are competent mages who would like to do a little curse removal on a wizard who spends much of his time as a boot.

Before you agree to such a service, no matter how many thousands of gold pieces you are offered, bear in mind that the wizard who placed the curse is said to have crafted it to warn him if anyone tampers with it, that it just might be set to transfer from Thendarion to any meddler, and that the wizard who placed the curse is said to still be alive, very powerful, and living in Thay—as one of the zulkirs. No prizes for guessing which one.



### Olosul's Tower

This small, slender tower is ringed by an overgrown walled garden that is busily sending many creeping vines up its stone sides. The visitor to Archendale can find it in the angle formed by the junction of Drovers' Lane and Spindral Street in southern Archenbridge.

Orosul is or was a white-haired but youthful-looking mage who probably employed potions of longevity. He was known for his research into griffon breeding and his efforts to craft spectacles for all in need of them. He came to Archendale from Sembia, used magic to identify the Swords, and reached a private agreement with them. The agreement is said to have involved payment of enough wealth to keep the Swords in luxury for life, fully equip the Ridesmen, and fund the rebuilding of Swordpoint and its cloaking in magical defenses. In return, he was allowed to settle in Archenbridge to dwell unmolested and unwatched, free to do as he pleased in this closed, intolerant-ofoutsiders town.

Orosul remained aloof from Arkhen society, never aiding the Ridesmen. He vanished almost two decades ago after warning the Swords not to let anyone enter his tower "lest doom befall them and fair Archendale both." His current whereabouts are unknown, but he is believed to have left Tori1 and perhaps this plane of existence.

Though his home is an unassuming structure on a quiet back-street corner, it is a popular destination for visiting mages, who seem fascinated by the shut tower and by the guard mounted over it by the Watch. Ten soldiers in chain mail are always around the tower, lounging on benches, strolling, and even playing

at dice – but if anyone looks like they are casting a spell or employing a magical item within sight of the tower, they spring into action, slinging stones, firing blunt-padded arrows, and hurling nets in an effort to ruin the magic and bring the miscreant down. Immobilized unfortunates are bludgeoned senseless and dragged off to Swordpoint for questioning. (I wonder what will happen if Orosul returns? Most Ridesmen active today have never seen him, and they will probably attack as usual.) As far as is known in town, no one has ever gotten into the tower, though there are persistent rumors in the Dales that this or that adventurer-mage has.

Some local Arkhenfolk like to scare visitors by telling them to go look at Orosul's Tower if they want to see what befalls even well-intentioned outlanders who settle in Archendale. In this same spirit, a smug local saying—the equivalent of "It is where you will never find it"—is "It is deep in Orosul's Tower."

#### The Place

The tower stands 60 feet high, and shuttered windows dot its smooth granite sides in a seemingly random array. Some folk think it has four floors, and others believe only three with a lofty spellcasting chamber-featuring Orosul's floating bed, a local carpenter insists—as the topmost floor. No one knows how extensive its cellars are. Birds flutter around its tangled, overgrown garden, but local reports record nothing larger and more menacing than rabbits and squirrels inhabiting this miniature forest. Two oval iron gates pierce the garden walls, which are crumbling and treacherous for



climbers, though their uneven blocks and falling mortar offer hand- and boot-holds for even the clumsiest ascending intruder. The gates are locked, and only Orosul, so far as is known, has the keys.<sup>15</sup>

#### The Prospect

Over the years, legends about the tower and its magic have grown hand-in-hand. But, it is certain that Orosul was an archmage of power, that he created hidden, permanent *gates* (teleport portals from one place in Faerûn to another), and that he had a fairly extensive collection of magical items and spellbooks—which, presumably, no one has plundered.

#### Travelers' Lore

A curious tale arose at the last Mage Fair: that Orosul is trapped on some other plane, awaiting someone to unwittingly pluck him back to his tower by reading aloud a certain glowing inscription or by disturbing a spell globe left behind in his tower. The tale also recounted that his tower can be freely entered by anyone who discovers the gate by being in the right back alley spot nearby and uttering the correct word—which is recorded in Twilight Hall in Berdusk, at Candlekeep, and at the Herald's Holdfast—and may well be written down elsewhere, too.

The tale came from a one-time apprentice of Orosul, Felsharra of the Four Winds, who confirms that Orosul does have a large circular floating bed, which used to be surrounded at night by its own cloud of magical darkness in which small

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Elminster: Vangerdahast actually has a spare somewhere in the royal palace in Suzail, and I believe another was left in the keeping of the Lady Cylyria Dragonbreast in Berdusk.







illusory stars drift and twinkle. (She knows this because important visitors forced her to enter his bedroom and wake him from a sound sleep on more than one occasion.) The bed could split apart to reveal much treasure, both monetary and magical, hidden in an extradimensional space "under" it.

Felsharra also told several wizards that under a cobblestone somewhere in the streets within view of the tower Orosul hid half of an ancient—possibly Netherese—power scepter. (She was never shown exactly where the cobblestone was.) Alone, either scepter half is a useless curiosity—but she reported that Orosul told her the halves glow with a dull, blue-green radiance when within about a mile of each other. If the half here is found and touched

to its mate—which was seized from the now-scattered hoard of the destroyed dracolich Rauglothgor and carried off to Zhentil Keep, where it presumably now lies somewhere in the ruins—they will fuse together, activating the scepter. The whole scepter can restore magical energy to items in need of recharging. It can also heal wounded or diseased folk who sleep with it touching their skin for long enough. Orosul speculated that a tenday or more of such contact would be needed to heal severe injuries.<sup>16</sup>

Visitors are warned that Arkhenfolk do not yet seem to have heard of this scepter. They have, however, already exhibited a decided hostility toward anyone trying to pry up stones in the streets around the tower.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>See Appendix II for full details of the scepter.



### Swordpoint

One of the strongest fortresses in all the Dales, Swordpoint is the main barracks of Archendale's widely respected army. A onetime robber baron's stronghold, it crowns a knoll of solid rock—akin to the Old Skull in Shadowdale—high above Arkhen Ford. From this height, it frowns down on the town of Archenbridge. Swordpoint houses the Dale's main armory and war forge, and also contains the Shrine of Swords. Of all outlanders, only pilgrims seeking to worship Tempus at the shrine are normally allowed through the fortress gates.

#### The Place

From afar, Swordpoint looks little different from its days as the hold of the notorious Sangalar of the Crag. It is a massive but crumbling keep whose heights are adorned with a bristling forest of ballistae surrounded by a stout palisade.

Anyone who gets inside Swordpoint immediately sees that the Arkhenfolk have quietly been making this a far more formidable hold. The palisade was always dubious, as the bases of the logs were set in a trench laboriously hacked out of the solid rock with the whole flammable affair kept upright by cross-straps that linked each log to the next. Since taking the place over, the Ridesmen have lined the inside of the palisade with stone walls several feet thick and built a continuous slate-roofed barracks and stable on the inside of that, giving them a broad platform behind the parapets where they can easily wheel catapults and ballistae about. These engines of war are mounted on carts that can be taken down from the heights by means of a ramp in the northwestern part of the cobbled courtyard. I

have seen with my own eyes that they can hurl missiles over all of Archenbridge, Arkhen Ford, and both banks of the River Arkhen for a considerable stretch. I saw over a dozen catapults and a dozen ballistae, allowing a defending force with enough loaders and ammunition the ability to devastate any attacking force that gets within reach.

Within the fortress's courtyard, the Shrine of Swords stands facing the gate. It is flanked by two rolling wooden barriers fitted with many crossbows, so that a few defenders could bar the way of many attackers should the massive metal-plated gates be breached. Keen-eyed Tempus worshipers can see vegetable growing frames located on log rollers (so that they can be quickly muscled out of the way of catapult and ballista carts) atop the barracks and stables.

Beyond the shrine stands the central keep inside its own inner moat. I saw chutes projecting from the keep walls. Flaming oil can no doubt be poured into the moat to give forces in the keep a last wall of defense.

#### The Prospect

The Ridesmen of Archendale are the most alert and deadly members of an aggressive and suspicious populace and spend much of their time at practice in the skills of war. A visitor dismissing them as local thicknecks is making a great—perhaps fatal—mistake. Three 60-strong rides (units) of this standing army are always in Swordpoint as a garrison. They are extremely wary of anyone approaching the fortress and of large armed bands who come within their view in general (that is, to Archenbridge or the mouth of the Dale).



This makes them an alert, war-ready garrison with little tolerance for the whimsical or pranksome. They do not buy anything from merchants who come to the fortress gates, and they see everyone as a spy. Only those who firmly profess their devotion to Tempus, prove this by making a substantial donation to the faith (which is shared equally by the garrison and the shrine, though anyone who reveals their knowledge of this arrangement is instantly and roughly ejected), and surrender their weapons are allowed in. Such visitors are escorted at all times and not allowed to approach either rolling barrier or tarry for a look around inside Swordpoint.

In fact, one can see little but bleak, forbidding stone in Swordpoint. The excitement is all hidden, and includes (my reliable sources<sup>17</sup> affirm) a deep and extensive network of tunnels and dwarven-hewn tunnels under the keep itself, deep in the heart of the rock (which is called the Sword). Legend insists that at least two underground ways lead into and out of Swordpoint: one of them connecting with Archenbridge (which may have been originally sited to conceal the tunnel mouth) and the other with the River Arkhen — underwater!

The tunnels hold the armory and treasury vaults, as well as deep wells and living quarters and provisions enough for all the folk in Archendale plus several thousand mercenaries to subsist on through a siege lasting at least four seasons. Many of these storage caverns are crammed with crates of crossbow bolts (both normal

quarrels and the giant sort hurled by the ballistae) and by piles of shaped stone projectiles for use in the catapults. Two hand-cranked elevators allow carts of this ammunition to be quickly raised up into the fortress. The carts are fitted with harnesses to allow soldiers to drag them like draft teams. I am told that the making and stockpiling of these missiles is an Arkhen obsession. They probably already have enough in storage to equip all the armies of Thay, Mulmaster, Hillsfar, Cormyr, and the Zhentarim several times overthough this does nothing to prevent them from gathering more with each passing month.

I say "probably" because Swordpoint is known to have both resident wizards and powerful magical defenses to prevent teleportation and scrying into and out of the fortress. These wards are rumored to involve a slurry of gorgon'sblood-treated whitewash on all interior stone surfaces and a very expensive, constantly renewed network of shielding spells whose precise nature has been the source of constant (and largely futile) speculation and spying from many powers of the Inner Sea lands. For their part, the Swords of Archendale seem bent on acquiring a small army of golems to defend this and every other important site in the Dale—an undertaking that has so far proven largely fruitless. In the past, they have hired several adventuring bands to try to seize golems that they were unable to make or pay coins enough to have made for them.

<sup>17</sup> Elminster: Sigh. Me again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Elminster: The gorgon's blood acts as proof against access from the astral or ethereal planes—and the spells are and will remain secret (sorry). One really cannot use scrying or divination magic into Swordpoint or the Sword beneath it, nor effectively use magics that try to analyze the shields. I am also unwilling to tell ye (Continues.)



The alert visitor can see one iron golem standing just behind the Shrine of Swords, but when I asked when it had been acquired, my escorts growled, "Yon thing is something to do with the shrine-statue of Tempus, perhaps. Ye'll have to ask the Swordmaster-'tis nothing to do with Swordpoint or the Ridesmen of Archendale." Then they hustled me out of the place – probably so I could not ask the Swordmaster anything. When I paid a pilgrim to query him about the golem, Swordmaster Stakaria said it was a toy of those who were not strong enough in their faith to leave the affairs of war to the wits and thews of people-and that it had nothing to do with him. Another source, over drinks a safe distance into Sembia from Archendale, told me that he believes the Arkhen forces cannot make the golem work-so it is just a statue as I write this.

This brings me to something all who come within sight of Swordpoint should know: Arkhenfolk take a very dim view of what they deem to be spying. Instant and permanent exile from the Dale, plus confiscation of all goods, is a sentence both common and (in Arkhen eyes) light for this offense. It is meted out on the spot and cannot be appealed. This hasty and paranoid policy has created a small legion of merchants who use false names and clumsy disguises when trading in the Dale thanks to past suspicions that have fallen on them.

Many folk believe the Arkhenfolk accuse people of and sentence people for spying largely to entertain themselves and



to make other Dalesfolk respect—nay, fear—them. After all, real spies are not treated in this way: Known agents for other powers are hustled into the keep, searched mentally through arcane and other means thoroughly by the mysterious wizards therein, and sent forth under a geas to carry out a dangerous mission for the Dale. (Typical missions are to spy on or perform sabotage against a rival power or enemy of the Dale.) It is also widely thought that mind-prying spells are habitually used against unfamiliar folk sighted in the vicinity of Swordpoint.

#### Travelers' Lore

No guests are permitted to stay or sup in Swordpoint save in dungeon cells. One is not even allowed to courteously use a privy. Do not expect to enjoy any hospitality here.

(Continued.) anything about the wizards other than that they are dedicated to the defense of the Dale and pose no danger to other lands, that they want to be left alone, and that they are not what Arkhenfolk think they are. Well, I will give ye one hint: Not all the folk of the Elven Court went west, and the folk of Archendale may one day find their Dale girt with trees that somehow they *must* defend and keep all other folk away from.



## The Heart of The Mine

The source spring of the River Arkhen bursts out of one wall of this large natural cavern and gushes across its floor to flow out and first see the sun of the surface world above Arkhen Falls. Though one end of the cavern opens out in a mountain flank, connecting it directly to the open air of Archendale, this cavern gained its subterranean-sounding name because it is the hub of the old Arkhen mines. Miners using its water and sunlight hewed many tunnels out its soft rock walls. They broke into other, smaller natural caverns and each other's workings. Veins of metal-bearing ore attesting to their efforts still gleam on some of the tunnel walls today.

The mining did not stop here because the riches ran out, but because an adult black dragon of exceptional size flew into the Heart of the Mine and forcibly established its lair here over 200 years ago. It "cast a shadow half as long as the Dale," as one (probably exaggerating) sage recorded. Arngalor was its name, and for a time the folk of Archendale cowered in their homes at the sound of its wings, and dug themselves deep cellars to flee into when it flew down through the Dale snatching up all the living meat it could find. The miners all either starved trying to dig their ways out of their delves without coming back into the Heart cavern or were slain by the dragon when they tried to slip past it to freedom.

Over the years in which the mines were inaccessible and other, less

profitable delves were established in many places in the Marching Mountains, legends grew in Archendale of the fabulous size and value of the dragon's hoard. Arngalor flew out often to raid nearby lands, defying Sembian mages and rival dragons alike to bring home load after load of riches. These were seen, and their nature was often confirmed by coins spilling out of the sky from the seams of some chest shattered by the dragon's mighty claws. But then there came a day some 70 winters ago when a blue dragon of even larger size swept into Archendale and roared its challenge.

Unwisely, cloaked in arrogance, the wyrm Arngalor flew forth to do battle. The challenger pounced on him from above and behind, rending and raking, bearing the black wyrm's mighty wings down until they crashed to earth together. Arngalor fought free, and a long and terrible fray ensued that scarred the very rocks of western Archendale. (Many fissures and rock scars are still explained away today by Arkhenfolk as "done in the dragon war.") At the end of that day, Arngalor lay torn apart and half-devoured beside the river, and the challenger flew raggedly away west into the mountains, never to be seen again.

Many miners and adventuring bands have braved the difficult trails up to the Heart of the Mine since that day—and found no treasure at all! It is likely something or someone long ago spirited away whatever treasure the dragon had amassed, but no hint of such a success has ever been heard. Local Arkhen lore still whispers optimistically of a hidden hoard awaiting those who seek it





diligently enough. The Cult of the Dragon, based in nearby Sembia, is determined to find Arngalor's hoard and can often be seen slipping through White Ford into the Dale, heading for the mines. Cult members are said to offer furious battle to Ridesmen—or anyone else they meet.

And why did the miners of Archendale not simply move back to the delves around the Heart, a known source of rich ore deposits? Because the mines are haunted. The miners who died trying to get out by tunneling past the dragon have left something of themselves behind: ghostly, spectral hands that appear out of the solid rock to attack the living—only to vanish back into the stones if faced with a serious threat. <sup>19</sup> These perils always appear in pairs, but they may gather into a raking, gouging group of as many as a dozen pairs. From time to time a determined mining band destroys all of these ghostly attackers—but gains only a day of mining in peace before all the hands reappear!

Determined miners have learned to sleep out on mountain ledges, not in the Heart or any of its delves. Sleeping miners are almost always throttled by silently attacking hands!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Aside from their ghostly appearance and ability to instantly phase into and out of solid stone, these spectral claws are identical in all respects to crawling claws (see the MONSTROUS MANUAL<sup>TM</sup> tome).



# The Weeping Rock

This well-hidden spot is one of the best campsites in the Marching Mountains. It is a dell overlooking the midpoint of Archendale where a spring rises at the top of a rock pinnacle (the "weeping rocky") to create a lovely bathing pool before cascading down out of the mountains to join the River Arkhen. A rampart of natural rock walls in the dell hides it from the open Dale below. Many Arkhenfolk have seen the lower reaches of Weeping Stream, but few climb the perilous trails suited best to mountain goats that must be traversed to reach this beautiful del. The fact that so few see it is a pity, because the dell has by far the most beautiful scenery in all Archendale.

Plants can be found in the dell that are highly prized by mages, alchemists, and perfumers alike, though a few travelers have spread rumors of plants with deadly poisonous stings and even man-eating growths lurking in the thick underbrush, too. Birds and game both remain plentiful because many prospectors and miners will not go near the Weeping Rock, and the old fire rings of its camp see scant use.

This shunning is due to the curse that lies on the Bell of Auros—a bell-shaped rock next to the bathing pool that stands as tall as two human males and has an archway carved in one of its sides. The inscription over the arch reads: "Auros of Elmere, Bard Beyond Peer," but the curious visitor finds nothing inside but

heaped stones—stones that have often been dug out, disturbing the dead minstrel's bones, in search of the enchanted harp that Auros is known to have played. A day after being disturbed, the stones are always found back in their original state, and no one has yet found the harp.

Would-be grave robbers do find something, though: an identical curse to the one found in Grave Hollow in the town of Archenbridge that is visited upon anyone who moves any of the stones inside the Bell. Afflicted persons are the recipients of a year-long *ironguard* effect that cannot be dispelled.<sup>20</sup> Affected beings cannot touch any metal—all metal items fall harmlessly through them! Such a state is ruinous to the livelihood of all miners and adventurers, so those drawn to digging for treasure dare not go near the Bell of Auros.

The curse is said to have been put in place by elves who grieved for the loss of Auros, a man who loved the Fair Folk and their forests and stubbornly fought against the tree-clearing that took Archendale from the elves who dwelt along the Aluivyn (the River Arkhen) and gave it to the humans, axe blow by axe blow, in the early days of settlement in the Dales. Sages across the Dragon Reach agree that the Howling Harp<sup>21</sup> that Auros played for most of his life-a gift from the elven queen Ciyradyl Phenthae, who is said to have gained it from a dying archmage of Netheril or some elder empire—was buried with him or hidden somewhere in the dell of the Weeping Rock and has never been found.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Elminster: It can be dispelled the same way that the one from Grave Hollow can—but that would be telling. <sup>21</sup>Elminster: The writings of the sage Mildras tell us that the Howling Harp had the powers of a philosopher's stone, a robe of eyes, a rod of lordly might, the ability to evoke continual light and to make all magical auras within 90 feet glow brightly with a white light, and the powers of pipes of haunting. Each ability was evoked by different played tunes.



## White Ford

This hamlet is named for a nearby whitewater-girt ford on the River Arkhen but is actually located well north of the water crossing on the north slope of the Arkhen Gorge just west of Arch Wood. It is closer to Highmoon in Deepingdale than it is to Archenbridge, which is located 45 miles downstream at the other end of Archendale, and is a decidedly more relaxed and civil place than the other Arkhen settlements.

White Ford is a sleepy, picturesque village of woodcarvers, farmers, mushroom-pickers, and shepherds. It has a horse pond and a well that all can freely use, a paddock field for those who like to camp out with their wagons, a single establishment that serves as both inn and tavern, a smithy, and a furnituremaker whose shop is worth a look. It is a useful, pleasant waystop, but it is not an exciting destination in itself.

### Landmarks

The white froth of the ford's rapids has been augmented by the dumping of boulders into the current to serve to break some of the force of the water and to mark the safe footing area of the ford. Aside from the rapids that mark the ford itself, the only landmark notable from a distance in White Ford is Beacon Tor, which stands just west of the village, facing Arch Hold across the small cluster of cottages and shops.

Arch Hold is a ditch-and-stone-ring stronghold with a dug-out sleeping chamber that is used by Rides on patrol. It is raised enough to overlook the entire run of the third local landmark: the Wolfwall.

The Wolfwall is so called because it keeps out wolves in winter and most twolegged wolves (brigands) in summer. This castlelike ring wall links Beacon Tor (where the Rides have, of course, several ready-laid beacons for signal use) with Arch Hold in a wide oval that encloses the village of White Ford. The wall has a firing platform along its inside surface and ladder platforms at periodic intervals, but no weapons are kept ready along it after years of steady pilferage of such a ready arsenal. The gates of this wall usually stand open, but permanent, counterweighted, swing-down, tree-trunk barriers are lowered across both gate mouths whenever Ridesmen want to halt traffic and inspect a few wagons (or, as the merchants of other Dales put it, collect a few passage bribes).

It is rumored that some part of the Wolfwall up near Beacon Tor is a living wall or some other sort of strange, deadly entity that sucks those who touch it inside the wall and feeds on them, draining their life and body away together! Ridesmen I spoke with scoffed at the notion—but did not offer to inspect the wall with me, even when offered a *lot* of coins.

Local lore insists that an ancient orc tribal relic, the Talking Bone, was walled up somewhere in the Wolfwall by an Arkhen warrior who had gained it in battle but grown tired of fighting for his life two or three times a day as orcs showed up to challenge him for it. It is said to allow anyone holding it to talk to an orc god (just which one has been forgotten in White Ford) or to another (nondeific) being of the bearer's choice, no matter how distant they may be. Collectors are warned that the folk of White Ford take a very dim view of anyone





tearing apart their defensive wall in search of this relic.<sup>22</sup>

Arch Hold gets its name because it overlooks the western edge of dark and dangerous Arch Wood. Several ballista emplacements along its walls can rake the trees' edge with giant crossbow bolts. Quite a few of these giant bolts in the Hold's arsenal are coated with pitch to serve as fire arrows.

White Ford has a single municipal building: the Arkhenor, a combination meeting hall (aboveground) and jail. Below its 400-person capacity great hall are rows of dungeon cells known as "the Lockholes."

Market Square stands in the center of town, and though it is no longer the site of a market, one can often find a single stall or peddler's cart there. At the center of Market Square, in the shade of a huge, gnarled felsul tree that is (correctly) said to be more than 400 summers old, stands. the village well. And there, traveler, you have all the landmarks of White Ford.

### Places of Interest in White Ford Shops

Felsharp's Furniture

Furniture, Dolls, Snow Sledges

5 5 5 5

This workshop and factory looks like what it once was: four cottages clustered closely about a barn. Felsharp joined them years ago, and in this dim, sawdust-filled, labyrinthine firetrap he makes jointed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>See Appendix II for details of the Talking Bone.



wooden dolls, deliciously smooth-finished rocking chairs and recliners custom-fitted to the patrons ordering them, and snow sledges. The dolls are sometimes ordered life-size by Sembians needing garment display mannequins or shady folk needing decoy humans to lure enemy fire. And the rocking chairs and recliners are truly the most comfortable things to lie in to ever touch my back and backside!

Felsharp is a fat, wheezing man who is always chuckling or humming to himself in a high, strange, birdcall-like voice as he scuttles about covered in sawdust and hung about with tools and measuring cords. But he is shrewder than he looks. He demands payment up front and stores all his takings in hollow wooden cylinders raised and lowered by pull cords at the bottom of narrow boreholes hidden under sliding floorboards. These holes are blocked part of the way up by iron cross-bars that only he knows the ways of drawing back

Felsharp's work is of the finest quality and is done as speedily as possible—sometimes involving all-night sessions, if a client is in a great hurry. Felsharp is easygoing and always ready to amend things if a client desires—a welcome departure from the tantrum-throwing artistes so common in creative professions across Faerûn. The traveler who is able to visit White Ford and then return to it two tendays or more later will find ordering one of Felsharp's chairs an action whose wisdom will shine forth many times over through years to come.

Three Shoes Smithy Blacksmith

5 5 5 5

This tall, fire-blackened stone building has a distinctive cedar shake roof.

Because Eduard the smith is a better forge master than carpenter, it slopes sharply down to the southeast. Eduard keeps four apprentices busy turning out barrel hoops and wheel rims, weapons for the ever-bloodthirsty Arkhen forces, and more mundane but useful items, such as hooks, bolts, strap-hinges, ladles, and horseshoes—to name the things he has the most of in stock. His specialty is the fast, expert (but not cheap!) emergency reshoeing of horses.



His forge mark is a winged bird rising out of an open hand. I have found it on ladles as distant as the Moonshae Isles and the wine-and-

sauce-houses of Tashluta! His shop is worth a visit, if only to see anvils leap when a man of mighty thews brings his hammer down!

#### Tavern & INN Hanged Hobgoblin House

::: by oo

This gruesomely named establishment is no other than a large, rambling barn in the last stages of seedy decay. But it has a kindly, attentive staff and all the comforts one can expect in a village inn, in addition to a ground-floor tavern taproom that sports several impressive sets of antlers that flank a goggle-eyed mounted hobgoblin head known to all as "Urbert." In a larger settlement or more welcoming Dale, the 'Obgoblin might well soon go out of business—but in White Ford it is a thankfully mediocre resting place.







# Battledale



he most-traveled and the most famous of the Dales, Battledale also boasts the bloodiest history of all the Dales. It has been the bat-

tlefield for warring powers in the Dragon Reach lands for centuries. In the words of one minstrel, this huge field of fray is "a Dale without a heart." It would be a mistake to interpret his words as meaning that folk in Battledale have no pride, pluck, or regard for each other or for their land. He meant what the travelers in the Dale soon discover: There is no one geographical center to this sprawling territory, no place where visitors feel they have reached the defining spot or heart of the region. Essembra, the Dale's sole settlement of any size, feels like a waystop on the road rather than the seat of any government or the center of any land.

And yet Battledale is probably the richest Dale of all. The unmapped lanes that wander and crisscross along the north bank of the River Ashaba west off Rauthauvyr's Road hide many manor houses and country estates where retired Sembians and others who have made much money in the Dales or around the Moonsea-and would like to relax and enjoy their coins a little before going to the gods-dwell. Some folk call this little-known region the Rauvedon Hills after a half-elven brigand who once had a (now-vanished) keep at its heart. Others refer to it as Circle of Stars country after the most famous druidic circle (also now gone) who dwelt in it. Sage lore and minstrelry hold references to a local steading called "Yevendale" because it overlooked the Pool of Yeven. But folk who say this is the name of a lost Dale that flourished here are mistaken or—like the treasure-map sellers in Ordulin and Feather Falls—indulging in deliberate mischief

Private armies and other nasty surprises await the overaggressive traveler down these winding lanes; more than a few wizards dwell in the rolling hills. One can even find teaching academies, artificial lakes, and gardens that rival those of the wealthiest Cormyrean nobles.

## The Countryside

The Circle of Stars country is but one of the backlands of Battledale. The other is the hill country that divides Battledale from Featherdale. A band of broken country running roughly southwest to northeast, this natural rampart consists of steep-sided, tree-girt hills studded with rock faces, crags, and small but heavily overgrown ravines-perfect brigand country. Known to some as the Hap Hills (after Haptooth Hill, the highest and most northeasterly of the Dun Hills), these debatable lands teem with deer and smaller edible game and are choked in berry bushes and brambles. "Lost and Hapless" is a oncefamous Dragon Reach ballad whose title has become a Faerûnwide expression for hopelessly wandering in the trackless wilds.

All most visitors see of Battledale—and think of, when they picture the Dale in their minds—are the open, rolling farmlands along Rauthauvyr's Road, referred to



by folk all over the Dales as "the Belt." Holdings in the Belt tend to be small. They are usually composed of stone cottages and barns inside stone walls or timber palisades, which have been erected against both trolls and brigands—including otherwise honest caravan riders who just happen to indulge in a little horsethievery as a sideline.

Walled gardens and orchards can be found in the Belt-particularly just west of Essembra, along the trails known as Hunter's Lane and Kelty's Amble-but it is mainly open grazing lands used by shepherd families. (These families buy needed goods from peddlers or in Essembra, augment their tables with game brought down with slings and in net traps, and defend themselves with sleep-poisoned crossbow bolts.) Streams and ponds are plentiful in this verdant land, and many shrines to Chauntea and Silvanus dot the countryside. The former usually take the form of a stone table laden with food offerings (which sustain many a hungry traveler by design-the goddess does not frown on the needy eating from her table. The shrines to Silvanus most often consist of a small bell hung over a pool or rising spring in a small forest clearing that has been planted all around with herbs and rare woodland flowers.

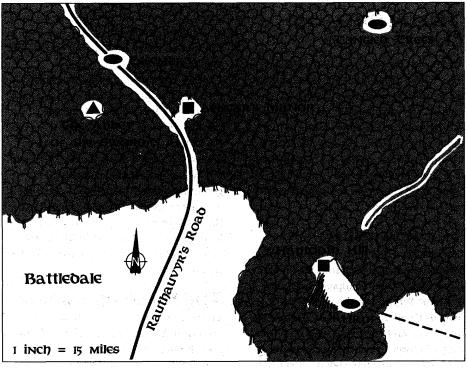
In summer this is marvelous country to camp in, although one should always beware of brigands on the run from the law in Sembia and spoiled and lawless merchants' younger sons who have come here for some hunting and may well indulge their high-spirited cruelty on the persons of those they meet.

One may also meet with pilgrims, foresters, and dopplegangers who imitate all of these sorts of folk—as well as raiding

bands of trolls, bugbears, mongrelmen, leucrotta, and similar menaces that lurk near civilized lands and prey on the unwary. The occasional depredations of owlbears and other more dangerous woodland creatures have kept the beautiful and fertile Three Rivers lands (where the Semberflow and the Glaemril join the Ashaba northwest of the Pool of Yeven) sparsely settled, but many an adventurer dreams of building a keep thereabouts. A few find the time and funds to do so, and these uplands are dotted with the monster-haunted ruins of such keeps, left lifeless when adventurers were overwhelmed in their beds by dragons or more mundane foes-or went off on one too many adventures and never returned.

One of the most famous of these abandoned holds is Wolfiaw Towers, the once-palatial stead of the Sembian adventurer Amberlan Wolfjaw. Said to stand atop a warren of twisting, hand-dug tunnels crammed with the loot brought back from his adventures, it fell into ruin as Wolfiaw's wits failed. He ended his days as a mumbling eater of berries and squirrels in a roofless ruin laid waste by fire, heavy snows, and lack of upkeep-for the crazed Wolfjaw slew all of his servants. Many folk have searched for his fabled riches, but so many overgrown ruins dot the region that no one is now sure just where Wolfjaw Towers is. Companies in neighboring Deepingdale and Tasseldale mount hunting expeditions into the Three Rivers uplands, but the traveler is warned that the operators tend to pick this or that ruin to camp in so they can look for Wolfjaw's gold. Should they ever find it, the personal safety of anyone who is on that expedition is not likely to be long-lasting.





Folk looking to make a less hazardous living in Battledale are advised that the Yevenwood, the forest that stands between the Pool of Yeven and Rauthauvyr's Road north of the River Ashaba, is rich in small game and deer. More dangerous denizens of this wood-sometimes known as the Wood of Many Names, because it has also been called Battle Wood, the Satyrs' Run, Sardhwood, and Foresters' Freehold were exterminated long ago. It is home to a common and delicious mushroom, the relshar, that can be harvested by the cartload by those who know where to look. Ferns and fiddleheads can also be gleaned from the Yevenwood.

The stretch of the Ashaba south of the Yevenwood has banks of blue clay, and several local potteries use this to make rounded clay bottles and carrying jugs, dishes, and mugs for sale in Sembia and the neighboring Dales. Arsith's Old Fires is noted for its beautiful glazes, but Elboar and Thorntree are names almost as highly regarded. Their firing marks can be found on pieces in use from one end of Faerûn to the other.

### The Battledarrans

Battledale is a meeting place for traders and warriors. Over the years, its folk have become as eclectic and tolerant a mix of races and backgrounds as one can find anywhere east of Waterdeep. Even half-orcs can expect a wary welcome.



## The Abbey of the Sword

Aside from the years of relative peace that have allowed Dale farmers to bring cartloads upon groaning cartloads of grain, cheese, ale, greens, fruit, and ale for sale throughout the Inner Sea lands to market, the most promising recent change in the fortunes of Battledale is the establishment of a fortified abbey in the heart of the Ghost Holds, just over five miles southwest of Essembra.

### The Founding

It began hard on the heels of the Time of Troubles, when a Amnian priest of Tempus heard about the appearance of the avatar of Tempus on the battlefield of Swords Creek in Mistledale. The priest, one Eldan Ambrose, reasoned that Tempus, who was seen striding across the field of fray, must have been walking *from* somewhere—and to find that point of origin all he need do was follow the god's footsteps until he could find no trace of the war god before him.

This Priest-General Ambrose did, and he came at last to a shattered, ancient castle. It was at this site where it seemed, despite claims to the contrary, Tempus had descended to Faerûn in the Fall of the Gods.

Ambrose camped in the ruins with a small escort, and in his dreams Tempus appeared to him, confirming that this place—once the hold of the warrior Belarus, a worshiper of the war god—was henceforth to be held sacred to the Lord of Battles. So Ambrose, an energetic and charismatic leader, caused the castle to be cleansed and rebuilt, deep wells sunk to

reach a lake of cool, sweet water far below (a lake in the Underdark, some murmur, from whence trouble may yet come), and an altar to be raised to Tempus.

All of this was done, and Ambrose made known his presence and intentions to the War Chancellor of Battledale, Ilmeth, who was much pleased. From that day to this, the priests and warriors (called the Sword-Sworn) of the Abbey of the Sword have staffed a shrine of the war god in Essembra, helped the Lords Men to scourge monsters and other evil from Rauthauvyr's Road and the woods around it, and begun to cleanse the Ghost Holds. (The Ghost Holds are discussed in a later section of this chapter.)

### The Hand of Tempus

The work detailed above may take years, even with the strong contingent of faithful now dwelling at the Abbey: Full priests number 27, novices are a dozen strong, and 46 Sword-Sworn guard the holy house. Ambrose and his holy warriors have discovered that some of the Ghost Holds stand over tunnels that descend into the Deep Realms and are patrolled by drow and that others house portals of fell magic that connect to a strange and deadly city, known as Sigil, on another plane, to a cavern on the flanks of Mount Helimbrar near Waterdeep, to the heart of the High Forest near the mysterious Star Mounts, and to a room with invisible walls and floor that hangs some 70 feet above the back streets of Iriaebor! The arrival of explorers to this last destination is frightening in the extreme to inhabitants of the city below, who have taken to paying wizards handsomely for swiftly hurling fireballs up at anyone appearing above their heads.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>As recounted in the novel All Shadows Fled by Ed Greenwood (TSR, Inc., 1995).



Exploration of the room is also scary for those using the *gate* to reach it, because the invisible chamber has one window and a part of the floor missing, and it is easy to fall from either of these.

Worse than these perilous means of transport themselves is the news that many beings—including beholders and illithids, as well as at least two veteran and deadly human adventuring bands—make regular use of these *gates* and are quite prepared to slaughter anyone who tries to stop them. At least one human group seems to be making a very good living as fast couriers between Waterdeep and Sembia, transporting messages, treaties, and small items of value halfway across Faerûn in a trice!

The faithful of Tempus have set up watches over the known gates and do battle with all who come through them save those who convince the priests that their entry was accidental or that they are adventurers from afar exploring these *gates* for the first time. Attempts to destroy or magically close the *gates* have thus far failed. They are unaffected by physical changes around them such as the collapse of the room they are in, and spells sent against them twist awry. Divination magics show only confusing scenes of the mysterious beings known as the sharn.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to pursuing the secret of the *gates*, the faithful of the Abbey practice the use of arms, pray to Tempus, and go out on patrols tirelessly, seeking to find and destroy all evil they encounter. Those who worship the war god find them quick to help in battle and generous with both healing spells and potions. The Abbey clergy ask only for a service in return for

such aid to others of their faith and never for payment.

Those of other faiths or unknown intent who meet with Temple patrols are challenged as to their identities and purpose. If their answers are not pleasing to the faithful, they may find themselves under attack. The priests always signal imminent hostilities with the order: "Submit!" The folk of the Abbey of the Sword do not consider it honorable to slay folk who would surrender if they had a choice. Those who surrender are taken to the Abbey and questioned sternly but with courtesy with the aid of prying magic to be sure of their true intent and likenesses. Such individuals are often later fed, apologized to, freely treated for any wounds or diseases they may have, and set free if they prove earnest and aboveboard in intent and purpose. An announced intent by questioned folk to settle in one of the Ghost Holds—so long as one does not intend to live by brigandage, work malicious magic, or establish a place of worship to a rival faith-is not considered a bad thing by the priests, but rather something to be encouraged. Assistance to such settlers is provided eagerly.

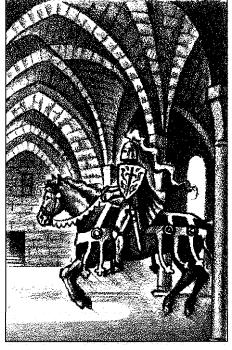
### Life in The Abbey

Those who dwell in the grim stone towers of the Abbey of the Sword share the same plain and martial lives as those who visit: waking hours devoted to Tempus and sleep in a bare stone cell holding only a bed, blankets, wall pegs for all clothes, and only battlefield relics and weapons consecrated to Tempus allowed as adornment. Hardly a room is without its battle axes and two-handed swords.

A typical day begins at dawn with a sung hymn of remembrance to those who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Detailed in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set.





have fallen in the service of Tempus that is followed by weapons practice to the sound of a priest intoning the names of the Valorous Fallen. Then the faithful take communal baths, which are followed by a hearty meal accompanied by prayers to the war god.

The day's work begins with an address (battle orders would be a more accurate term, I am told) from the abbot, followed by everyone pursuing one of the Tasks he sets them: guard duty at the abbey; repair or building work at the abbey; hunting, pumping water, buying food in Essembra, and tending the walled abbey gardens. (The abbey gardens are given over nearly entirely to fruit and vegetable growing; only such flowers are necessary to encourage pollination of the crops by bees or are vital ingredients in *potions of healing* are grown here.) Other Tasks

include going on armed patrol into the lands around; forging new weapons and armor for the greater glory of Tempus and for sale to all (to raise funds); and the making of healing drafts for the use of the faithful and all those who battle valiantly and can thus be said to have furthered the influence of Tempus, whatever their own primary faith may be.

Any highsun meal is casual, and work on the Tasks continues until sunset, when a clear-voiced clergy member sings a hymn, another preaches a sermon, and evenfeast is enjoyed by all. Then those on Night Vigil begin their patrols or guard duty, and the rest of the abbey sleeps.

Abbey life is too simple an existence for me, but guests are always welcome at the Abbey of the Sword for stays of up to nine days to sample the monastic way of life, and they may stay longer if wounded. In this way, the hand of Tempus reaches out to gather in new faithful. Such guests are known as Seekers and are closely watched by senior priests, known as Battleladies and Battlelords, who lead the Sword-Sworn, No guest has any chance to get near the abbey wells, armory, or kitchens, nor to accompany abbey patrols anywhere.

Beings the folk of the Abbey of the Sword want to capture, disarm, or force into surrender are often struck down by the application of a *dance of the fallen* spell, a grisly variant of the *blade barrier* that calls into being a whirling, bludgeoning cloud of the severed limbs of warriors fallen in battle! This grim magic usually batters its target into senselessness or submission and is also used to force folk whom the Abbey faithful have no wish to fight, such as paladins or righteous folk of good faiths, to turn back.



### Aencar's Manor

Ruined Manor Estate and Castle

The ruined manor house of the Mantled King of the Dales stands in full view of travelers. It is located just east off Rauthauvyr's Road not quite four miles south of Essembra. Aencar's Manor still looks like a stately home, and its outer grounds serve as the local site of Shieldmeet. It is an impressive landmark that tempts adventurers and fools alike into "just an afternoon" exploring its many towers—a side trip from which many never return.

The Manor's low, ornamental outer walls lean crazily amid the trees and creepers, and in places have fallen down entirely They enclose only traces of the once-splendid gardens, but at the heart of the brambles the massive, roofless central castle still throws its stone spires to the sky. Its huge size and air of rich splendor—thanks to splendid relief carvings of mounted knights on the ramparts—can readily be seen from the roadside.

This splendor is belied by the haunting of the ruins: The folk of Battledale swear that Aencar's ghost, his face a melting ruin, rushes with silent menace around his castle, attacking all intruders with a spectral blade that withers all flesh it touches.<sup>3</sup> Aencar's true foe is the ghostly remnant of one of the sorcerers who slew him at a feast in Essembra by summoning a dracolich, only to die in a trap while plundering the Mantled Ring's manor for magic. This evil mage (one Alacanther of Arrabar) is also said to survive—as a wraithlike form that can hurl spells.<sup>4</sup>

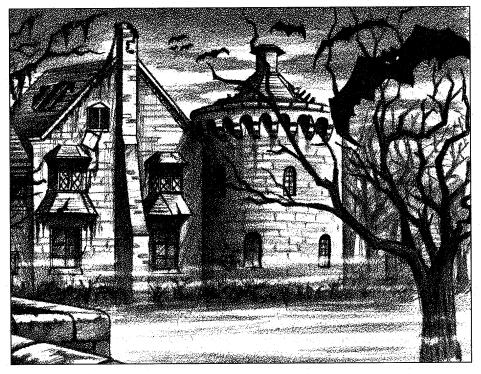
The two undead creatures are locked forever in combat. Folk who have seen them come to blows say they usually rend each other into nothingness as they tumble into the now-dry moat, only to reappear the next nightfall to chase each other around the ruined castle in furious battle. again!

Yet this fearsome pair is not the only peril of the Manor: Crumbling stairs and ramparts often fall on, or out from under, those disturbing them. The bones of several unfortunate explorers can be seen protruding from under various piles of fallen rock throughout the castle. Other, more fortunate adventuring bands have fled the place after reaching the cellars and discovering not just more impending collapses awaiting them, but a dracolich and a deadly band of human adventurers who seem to serve it! Such sightings suggest to me that the Cult of the Dragon has installed a Scaly One in a lair here, using the Manor's haunted reputation to discourage intruders. The folk in Essembra prefer to simply say the Manor is haunted and best left alone rather than speculate on the truth of such reports.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster: In truth, Aencar is a watchghost (detailed in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set) who actually tries to aid those dedicated to cleansing the Chost Holds, fighting brigands and monsters to make Battledale safer, or defending the Dales against external foes. He renders this aid by imparting knowledge and by directing adventurers to his hidden potions of healing and other magics. His enchanted broad sword +1 at every hit causes its victims make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or suffer a withered limb (effects identical to a staff of withering).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Alacanther survives as a wraith who cannot be turned—though he often fades into invisibility when someone tries, wafting until everyone's guard is down before attacking again. He can also hurl random offensive spells every second round. He usually attacks with Evard's black tentacles first and then flits about whoever is trapped, draining their life forces and hurling fireball and lightning bolt spells at those who try to aid them.





With that caution firmly in mind, let me recommend that every traveler on Rauthauvyr's Road in full daylight at least halt here—in an alert and armed group, mind you—for a good look at the Manor. Its crumbling splendor is a reminder to all that the Dales have not always been rustic backwaters, poor and uncultured next to rich and bustling Sembia, but rather that they preceded that proud land and reached splendid heights of their own.

Aencar was the only person to unify the Dales (except Archendale and the High Dale). The measure of his achievement can readily be taken by recalling the recent folly of Lashan of Scardale. Upon the Mantled King's death, the various wolves he had held at bay rushed in to rend what he had wrought, plundering what riches Aencar's lieutenants had not already taken for their own.

Yet there have always been legends of riches that were not found - and more: strong magic intended for the defense of the Dales and given to the Mantled King by approving elves and human mages and priests who hoped to dwell in a stable realm. This magic was hidden in places only Aencar knew and was lost forever at his death, the fireside tales tell us-but was it? Or does it await the fortunate adventurer still in some concealed niche or secret passage in the ruined Manor? Certainly someone at a recent Mage Fair thought so - and when last I checked, no fewer than six outlander mages had traveled through Sembia to the Manor-and disappeared!



### Essembra

This town serves as a market center for the folk of Battledale and a supply waystop for the heavy traffic between Sembia and the Moonsea lands that passes along Rauthauvyr's Road. Visitors usually find Essembra pleasant but curiously unimpressive: Except for its walled center, whose ramparts are cloaked by maple trees, it consists of long rows of cottages fronting along the trade road for a mile or more with only a few cross streets and back alleys. The trees of the Elven Court woods hem the community in on all sides.

The center of Essembra is marked by watchposts<sup>5</sup> and fields. The north field is the site of the market. In the summer months, some carts and stalls are always open for business here, and local farmers bring their livestock and produce to sell to traveling merchants, merchant companies, and customers. The south field, with its horse pond, is where all visitors are allowed to camp or tether their beasts.

Essembra is named for a famous longago adventuress who was born in a cottage that stood more or less on the site of the present-day statue of Aencar. Before Aencar was born, she carved out a name for herself Faerûnwide with her sword and her daring when lawlessness was the rule in the fledgling Dales. Famous for spurning an elf lord's advances and for wrestling a dwarven king to the death when captured in his gem mines, Essembra's flame-red hair and smoldering red eyes betrayed to all that she was more

than human. Her true weredragon nature was not revealed until she abandoned all her worldly wealth and achievements to wed a silver dragon. For years she rode on his back among the clouds over Faerûn, but then was seen no more. Her fate is unknown, though some sages have gone so far as to speculate that she may have tried to bear a dragon's child and died in the birthing. Others dismiss such talk as errant nonsense and the prattle of overly romantic fools-why would she, a very knowledgeable woman, doom to death herself and her child through such an action? These more rational loremasters say Essembra sought out other worlds or distant places on Tori1 and dwelt there with her dragon consort—where she may live still.

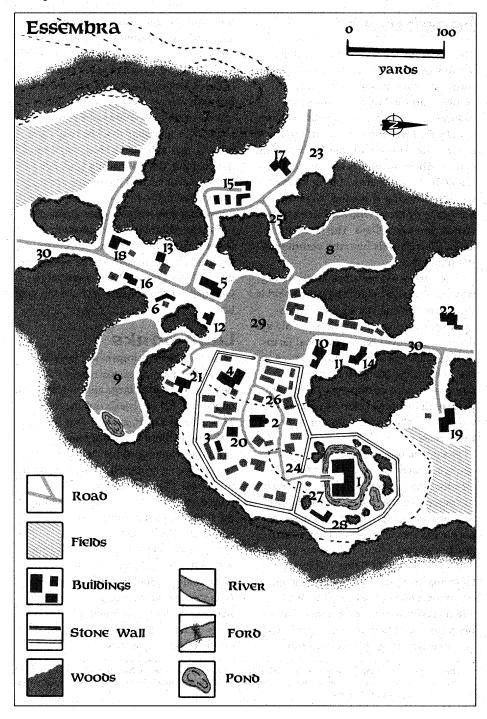
### Landmarks

Essembra has few impressive buildings, but all folk passing on the road cannot help but notice the large and muddy open courtyard that the road runs through. This is Battle Court, ground kept free of stalls or encampments by an ancient agreement among all the Dales, for use as "a marshaling ground for armies in times of red war." The old center of Essembra, where most of its folk dwell, lies within the walled area that forms the eastern side of the Court.

Two consecrated places rise proudly within this walled area: The House of Gond and a shrine dedicated to Tempus. Less striking but as elegant are the Bold Banners festhall, which stands outside the walls on Rauthauvyr's Road, and the Elf on the Flying Stag eatery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>These are small wooden archers' towers fitted with spars that can be lowered down across the road to block horses and carts. Except in wartime or when someone in Sembia or the Dales is looking for important fugitives in earnest, they are usually unmanned.







### Essembra Map Key

- 1. Ilmeth's Manor (residence of the local lord)
- **2.** The House of Gond (temple of Gond)
- **3.** Swordspoint Shrine (shrine to Tempus)
- **4.** The Hitching Post (tack and hardware shop)
- **5.** Durn's Forge (smithy)
- **6.** The Watchful Eye (inn)
- 7. Aencar's Watch (pinnacle lookout)
- 8. North field
- 9. South field (and horse pond)
- **10.** The Silver Taproom (tavern)
- 11. The Green Door (inn and festhall)
- **12.** Four Flying Fish (tavern)
- **13.** The Lonely Mermaid (festhall)
- 14. The Bold Banners (festhall)
- **15.** Dunstable's Sleeping Cat (guarded warehouse facilities)
- **16.** Adderposts (junk and pawn shop)
- **17.** Findar's Bag O' Nails (carpenter and woodworker, home and shop)
- **18.** Sarguth's Wheelworks (wagons made, repaired, and refitted)
- 19. Tantul's Old Tankard (brewery)
- **20.** The Elf On The Flying Stag (restaurant)
- 21. Beldarag's Finest (stables)
- **22.** The Old Hoof (horse-powered grist mill)
- 23. Hunter's Lane
- 24. Bowshot Lane
- 25. Elndar's Watch
- 26. Glyndar Street
- **27.** Aencar Vigilant (statue)
- **28.** Armory and Stables of the Lord's Men
- 29. Battle Court (marshalling ground)
- 30. Rauthauvyr's Road

The Old Hoof grist mill, on north Rauthauvyr's Road, serves a dual purpose. Aside from the mill's prosaic and obvious function as a mill, the town uses a push bar fitted with manacles in the Old Hoof as a jail. Miscreants temporarily too weak, tired, or wounded to grind grain are draped over the bar or bound in place along it with their chains.

The most splendid structure in Essembra is Ilmeth's Manor, home of the hereditary lord of Essembra and war chancellor of the town. It stands at the innermost or rear walled area in a garden where one can see the statue of *Aencar Vigilant* — a sculpture of the Mantled King in granite that was enchanted by a mischievous wizard long ago (more about that later).

### Places of Interest in Essembra Unique Sites

### The Ghost Holds

A likely source of treasure for curious adventurers-as well as discarded gear and even possible homes-are the many abandoned and overgrown farmsteads and manor houses that lie both east and west of Rauthauvvr's Road just south of Essembra known as the Ghost Holds. The most famous of these ruins is the crumbling castle of Aencar's Manor (dealt with in its own section earlier), but between it and Essembra are several dozen lesser dwellings cloaked by the forest. Despite their collective name, it is rare to encounter undead in these fallen structures, since the Lord's Men, the volunteer band of adventurer-soldiers led by War Chancellor Ilmeth, chase out ghouls and other predators regularly. Nevertheless, the usual horrific tales of monsters and



tantalizing rumors of treasure are told about the Ghost Holds.

The traveler can readily see seven or so of these ruins by ascending the splendid natural lookout of Aencar's Watch (said to be the reason the Mantled King chose this spot for his capital in the first place) by means of a very steep footpath west of Dunstable's Sleeping Cat warehouses. Be warned that on several occasions brigands using trip cords and push poles have caused the deaths of lone visitors on this path, and plundered their bodies with impunity. Ascend alert, armed, and preferably with several companions.

Some of the larger ruins still have towers, stone-walled compounds, moats, and extensive storage cellars that are more or less intact - and most of the ruins are either home to, or regularly hunted through, by woodland monsters seeking easy food. No maps of the Ghost Holds area are known to survive, and some local shepherds say that bandits have purchased and destroyed the last of these available locally and have even despoiled maps in the libraries of nearby Sembian cities. Brigands and fugitives from justice in Sembia, Zhentil Keep, and Hillsfar have long been rumored to use the ruins as homes, moving from one to another whenever the Lord's Men or other large armed bands intrude.

All Essembrans agree that the woods south of the town are dangerous. (If they cut wood, set traps, or pick berries, they usually go north and west.) They also agree that the Ghost Holds are so numerous that one could spend several years just exploring them all! They are a relic of times when Essembra was much larger and more pros-

perous, and the Dale served as a woodland retreat for wealthy Sembian nobles and as Sembia's trading outpost with the elves and the few humans who then dwelt in the heavily forested western Dragon Reach lands.

One dark rumor even asserts that at least one ancient magical *gate* to other planes and several connections to the Underdark are hidden in the cellars of these ruins—and that slavers and some monstrous things still use them. The logs of the Lord's Men support this belief. They recount battles with a wide variety of creatures usually known in Faerûn only through the writings of sages and the wilder sermons of priests.

## Residences Ilmeth's Manor

It is a surprise to find a miniature moated castle in a town as small as Essembra, but that is what the hereditary local lord, War Chancellor Ilmeth-descended from Old Ilmeth, right-hand swordcaptain to King Aencar-lives in. Ilmeth is a grim, moody veteran warrior overly concerned with the safety of Battledale. He leads the Lord's Men, his band of soldiers, against monsters, brigands, and the like and has a small armory and stables for them here. The walls also enclose a garden (a gloomy place in the perpetual shade of several huge, old oak and walnut trees), a fish pond cloaked with lily pads, and the fortified manor house of the Ilmeth family.

The current war chancellor has no wife or descendants and may well prove to be the last of his line—but he is well protected: His magnificent wood-paneled home houses a comfortable domestic staff



and a six bodyguards. Visitors are admitted only on business—proposals of advantage to Essembra, in particular, get the gates to open—but the lucky few let in see maps to rival the libraries of Candlekeep and royal palaces elsewhere as well as the tattered banners, war trumpets, and battered shields of the great Dale heroes. All these fragments of history are preserved securely here largely because some sort of enchantment involving both watchghosts and invisible stalkers ensures that anyone who carries off a relic soon brings it back again.

Such relics include the mace of Aencar and the arm of Halondras. For those not familiar with ancient Dales history, Halondras was a petty king remembered mainly for his success at tirelessly conquering one self-styled lord's hold after another and adding each one to his own lands. He hewed out a small realm before dying in battle. His daughters found his body on the battlefield clutching in one hand both his own crown and the larger spired one made from the circlets of three lords he had conquered that he normally wore on his helm.

They could not pry his fingers open and did not want the crowns to fall into enemy hands, so they cut off his arm and burned his body that night. They spirited themselves and the arm away so that his slayer, an otherwise forgotten lord named Salygrar, found only bones and ashes where the king had fallen. The arm disappeared, buried by the daughters before they fled to other lands (from whence they never returned), and it was not until Ilmeth's adventuring days that it came to light in a monster-haunted network of tunnels under his own manor!

Local rumors tell that the tunnels go a long way into the woods and there come to the surface, allowing the war chancellor to enter and leave Essembra unseen, It is certain that with their aid Ilmeth never fell into the hands of Lashan's forces or the Sword of the South Zhent army that briefly occupied Essembra during the Time of Troubles. Tales are also told in the Dale about chests of gems and gold dust from Aencar's treasury being hidden down in the tunnels, but Ilmeth is not polite to folk who ask him about such things.

From my own researches I can tell you that secret passages honeycomb the thick stone walls of the manor and definitely connect Ilmeth's bedchamber with the kitchens, the cellars, and at least two other bedchambers. I can also say that one entry to this web of passages is gained by moving a suit of armor aside. However, since visitors may encounter over 60 full suits of armor standing throughout the manor amid the old weapons and blazoned shields, finding the right armor may take some time.

The sense of battle and long history is everywhere in Essembra. Local lore insists that somewhere in or near the town—in a magically hidden lair reached by stepping between a certain pair of trees, perhaps, or in the pit of a back-ofthe-house privy-is the hastily hidden treasury of Lashan of Scardale: several chests of gold and platinum coins brought here to pay his mercenary troops and lost amid the confusion of battle and the collapse of his dreams of empire. Essembran citizens insist just as firmly, however, that any folk who start tearing apart homes, shops, or anything else in town looking for treasure will find



short and sharp endings to such careers and possibly to their lives, too.

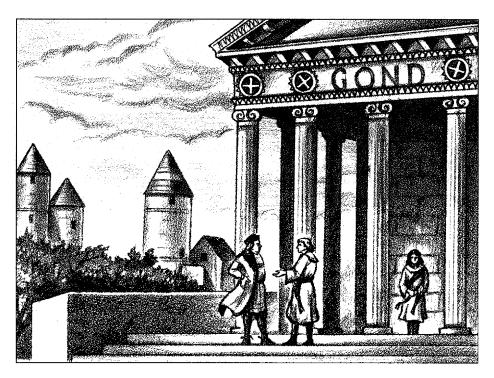
## Temples The House of Gond

This temple has an impressive facade: broad stone steps ascend between massive pillars that support a portico adorned with gears—stone cogs that turn endlessly thanks to enchantments that also make them glow faintly in darkness. But the quiet splendor of this temple is marred by an air of snobbery and inertia. Here there is none of the excitement over new things and devices seen in other temples to Gond.

Visitors are not allowed to do more than view an entry hall crowded with interesting-looking but minor mechanisms—such as the screw-lift water pump

and the two-powder-mix cooking hot plate—while facing eloquent pleas for donations to the greater glory of Gond unless their devotion to the God of All Artifice impresses the underpriests. Then they summon Lord High Smith and Artificer Gulmarin Reldacap.

Only those who in Gulmarin's sole and haughty judgment serve Gond with sufficient dedication (that is, large monetary amounts) and style (conservative and respectful) receive any aid from Essembra's House of Gond. All others are treated to a blessing from the god and a further entreaty to join the faith—or if one of the faithful, an exhortation to renew and strengthen their dedication by undertaking a task of Gulmarin's choosing—and then shown the door.





### Swordpoint Shrine

This simple stone chapel stands always open to the street, and travelers of any faith are welcome to take shelter herein if the weather is inclement. Those who attempt to set up camp within the walls, however, are directed firmly to the south field.

Swordpoint Shrine is staffed by priests from the nearby Abbey of the Sword, who can recount much of the war history of Battledale. If shown a map, they will readily point out battlefields and known ruins. They will display proudly the rusty shards of a blade said to have belonged to Aencar the Mantled King, as well as a plain dagger left behind in Essembra by Lashan, the self-styled Lord of the Dales, and several more dubious relics such as a blackened blade purportedly used by an elven warrior to slay a local red dragon several centuries ago.

The priests tend the sick and wounded for reasonable fees and also provide bed rest in the back room of the shrine. For tending the injured they ask a typical donation of 5 gp for an examination, the dressing and cleaning of wounds, the lancing of swellings, and the application of simple poultices and herbal medicines. Bed rest at the shrine costs an additional 1 gp per night, which includes bedpan and linen services plus simple fare of bread-and-milk puddings and watered wine. Medicines and potions of healing are also sold here. What is not in stock can be brought from the Abbey of the Sword in a day.

I am told that the usual shrine stock of holy water is 30 vials, which sell for 25 gp each, and 14 *potions of healing*, which can be had for 450 gp each; however, a discount of 20-30 gp is sometimes given if the person to be healed is a worshiper of Tempus who was afflicted as a result of battle. The priests will not sell more than 12 potions to any individual or group in case other needy persons arrive later.

### Shops

### Adderposts

Curiosities and Secondhand Goods

888

Named for its curious serpentine-carved spiraling door pillars, this notorious shop deals in secondhand and, occasionally, stolen goods.<sup>6</sup> Because of the door detailing, rumors linger that this old, lofty-ceilinged building was once a temple to some dark serpent god.<sup>7</sup> Adderposts enjoys a growing reputation in northern Sembia. It is *the* place to transact shady business for Sembians who do not want to be seen engaged in such activities by their fellows at any of the local Sembian shady establishments!

The proprietor, Duskar Flamehaern, is a soft-voiced man of few words and nocturnal habits who is known to have a loaded crossbow handy at all times. He dwells above the shop with his three daughters—beautiful, tall, thin, silent women with black curly hair that almost sweeps the floor when they unbind it. It is rumored that they are excellent forgers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: By these coy words, Volo is attempting to imply that Duskar is the local fence for stolen goods. This implication is true, and Duskar has some very unsavory allies. His daughters are even more ruthless. They love to lure amorous travelers into situations where drugged wine can lead to easy robbery at best and a quick introduction to slavery at worst.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster: These rumors about a cult are true. Have fun finding out more, for I shall not tell you—other than to quote the motto of the cult: "The Serpent Never Sleeps." Still words some live by today. . . .



and limners, able to paint holes, nail heads, and seams where none exist so well that only the closest examination can uncover the deceit!

The shop is a fascinating jumble of old masks, armor heaped up in piles, and rickety stairs ascending to this or that overhead bedchamber. (All of the bedchambers are probably linked above the uneven plank ceiling.) Lamps hang in profusion from the ceiling on bars that can be lowered by means of pulleys, and clothes hang on shoulder racks from every tread of the various ascending stairs. Only Duskar can quickly find anything in the chaos of his shop, but he knows where everything is and is enraged by browsers who pick up things, carry them around for a while, and then set them down elsewhere.

Adderposts is the place to come if you need something unusual in a hurry-particularly in the line of disguises, where a certain type of armor or uniform must be had and no other will do. Duskar seems to have specimens of every sort of military garb from the Moonsea and Dragon Reach lands. Coins he takes in payment are poured into one of a dozen or so speaking tubes that stand against pillars here and there around the shop-tubes that pour their contents down to unknown regions below. Change is brought to customers by one of Duskar's daughters, so it is likely thieves will not find any coin at all in the shop itself.

## **Beldarag's Finest** Stable

\* \* \* \*

This waystables is busy night and day swapping fresh horses to travelers in exchange for their lame, exhausted, or mistreated mounts. To keep his reputation good, Beldarag never sells any mount he has just received in trade. This way sick and lame animals have a chance to heal, and the truly useless mounts do not earn him a customer's ire. (All such trade animals are taken to Beldarag's farm on Hunter's Lane.)

Beldarag is a very good judge of horse, and has bred certain of the beasts he has acquired in trade so shrewdly that horses bearing his own sword-and-stars brand are now ranked very highly in the Dragon Reach lands. Local Dale farms provide Beldarag with most of his stock, though, and the produce of other farms feeds the animals. The one-eyed old ex-warrior gets good prices on feed because he always harvests and takes away what he needs himself, freeing the farmers from the hauling work and expense.

Many merchants using Rauthauvyr's Road swap mounts here even when they do not really need to, knowing that they will get good horseflesh in the peak of condition. A typical riding horse costs 100 gp, and one can be traded in for 35 gp. A typical draft animal costs 260 gp and can be traded in for 100 gp.

### **Dunstable's Sleeping Cat** Rental Storage

5 5 5 5

This row of rental warehouses is named for its most attractive fixture: the fat, furry, constantly snoring monstrosity that is the owner's pet cat. Indyn Dunstable is a spice merchant who grew tired of the ruthless, frenetic cut-and-thrust of Sembian trade and retired here to eke out a more meager but much eas-



ier living by offering clean, secure, noquestions-asked rental storage to all interested patrons.

The rules are: no unsecured magic, no kidnap victims or other living captives, no molds or other fungal growths, and no live or undead monsters can be stored. Everything else is fine. The staff will tend plants that need watering and take care of similar minimal maintenance tasks.

The warehouses are constructed of fused stone (that is, stout stone blocks melted together by magical means) and seem able to withstand almost everything. Each wall is pierced by a door and a ventilation grating, both of massive metal construction and covered by rolling shutters of even heavier metal. There may well be other defenses I am not aware of, but one can readily see the rooftop ballista emplacements, the triple-key locking system (so that intruders must overcome three specific guards to gain entry), and the 20-blade strong standing guard contingent. Above each door is also a weighted drop net that those on the roof use without hesitation to entangle intruders-even if their fellow guards are embroiled in some sort of fray. At least half of the guards are expert slingers who strike first at anyone who looks to be employing any sort of magic.

At least one of the guards is armed with a wand of viscid globs, and some four or so of them wear rings of spell turning. If you get past these, you must still face Dunstable, who has comfortable apartments in one of the three warehouses, and his cat. Dunstable employs an unknown personal array of magical items, and the cat is actually some sort of shapechanging monster that has reached

an understanding with the retired merchant. It can turn into something far more fearsome than an portly cat if facing intruders.

These defenses make Dunstable's *the* safe place to store your valuables—if you can afford the 25 gp per day per cubicle fees. A cubicle is 6 feet wide × 10 feet high × 10 feet deep, and the rental fee includes keys to its padlocked, openworkgrating front door. The walls, floor, and ceiling are solid stone. On my visit to the warehouses I swear I saw a throne with a crumbling, long-dead crowned occupant inside one cubicle!

Many adventuring bands virtually make Dunstable's their home while on forays in the area – but be aware that he does not allow patrons to cook, eat, bathe, or sleep in his warehouses, and that he removes all goods in rental space no longer paid for into "safe storage cellars" underground nearby. These cellars have their own monstrous guardians (rumors of links to drow are simply talk, I assure you). Goods are recovered from these storage cellars only upon payment of the lapsed daily storage fees plus a penalty - though I have also heard that Dunstable can be flexible in negotiations with the needy.

### Durn's Forge

Weaponsmith and Blacksmith

This smithy is known as "Durn Blacksmith" to some folk because that is what the sign over the door says. Here lives and works Durn the Red, a jovial giant of a man who once fought as a hiresword all over the Inner Sea lands. He once picked up a haughty Zhentilar commander in full



plate armor and with one arm threw the man, underhanded, across the smithy, out its open door, and into the horse trough outside a good six paces beyond. Many Essembran folk tell tales of his breaking what he deemed an inferior sword blade simply by grasping it at both ends, barehanded, and pulling his fists down and toward each other! Most of the time, however, Durn spends his days hammering out horseshoes and tools of solid, dependable quality. His scythe blades are favored by farmers all across the Dales.

Durn loves to make swords of large size—and his parlor trick to impress haughty visitors is to casually snatch down a two-handed sword from the rafters and with a single backhand swing, not looking at his target, "behead" a solid oak post as large around as the great helm perched on it! Durn does not want to become every Sembian's pet swordmaker, however, so he requires both huge fees in advance (up to ten times the normal price of a blade) and notice of a month before beginning work on a commission. He discourages thieves by pointing out his guardian sword: a naked, floating long sword that appears and disappears silently and at random here and there around the smithy. Durn warns that it hunts down and slays all who take things from his smithy without paying for them in full.

The truth is that the sword is a harmless apparition, the result of a wizard's miscast curse against Durn. The curse was upon him during his mercenary days for his part in the pillaging of a mage's tower. The sword never manifests far from him and has no solid existence, but more than one of the smith's lady friends over the years has been terrified by its sudden appearance during more intimate moments and complained of feeling a chill as it floated through her!

Durn must be wealthy, but shows no sign of having a great deal of money. He employs only a few apprentices and lives simply, enjoying the company of ladies awed by his mighty size and strength.

### Findar's Bag o' Nails

Woodworking, Carpentry and Findings



Findar's is a pleasant, crowded place dominated by trestle tables, shavings, half-finished items, and the smell of fresh-cut cedar. Run by a man who seems eager to help, Findar's is a fast-growing business: The wing that houses a selection of ready-made chairs and travel chests seems as new as the wares it contains. This wood-worker and carpenter also deals in nails of all sizes, hooks, and locks. Findar tries to have at least one sample of each regular (not custom-made or specially ordered) item he makes on display, which makes this shop very useful to the traveler in a hurry.

Findar is a young, slim man with a pointed black beard and an air of nervous energy. He is no fine craftsman, but his work is solid and dependable and boasts reinforced corners and stress points. A dozen local youths are learning the trade as apprentices alongside him—and with ever-growing orders for packing crates and strongchests from Hillsfar and Sembia, their hands are needed.



### The Hitching Post

General Store



The Post is an unexciting but very useful place. Many a passing merchant has found its stock of spare wagon wheels, tarps, and lashing cords to be a boon from the gods! This large, well-stocked general store sells oil, spices, rope, clothing from Sembia, parchment and a variety of inks, and fine metalwork from the Moonsea. In other words, it sells all the things that the verdant farms and thick copses of Battledale cannot produce. The sleek proprietor, Rhannon, overcharges shamelessly. If customers cavil at her prices, she shrugs and tells them they can no doubt find what they need more cheaply "just down the road in Sembia."

Every town seems to have one citizen who knows all, sees everything, and wields a lot of local power behind the scenes—and in Essembra, Rhannon seems to be the one. Adventurers are warned that this wily, stout little lady is not as old as she looks, has an exciting past adventuring career of her own, and is quite able to defend herself.

**The Old Hoof** *Grist Mill* 

5 5 5 5

This grist mill serves the needs of both local farmers and the brewery in town. Its millstones are powered by horses harnessed to the spoke spars of two gigantic driving wheels. The horses walk endlessly around and around in the straw-covered turf when the mill is grinding, working in hour-long shifts that overlap slightly, so

that one wheel is up to speed before the other winds down to a stop.

As mentioned before, miscreants may be sentenced to a day or a shift at the wheel, pushing or pulling as they please in their manacles. On one recent occasion, a band of brigands was caught lurking in the woods near the north field by the Lord's Men. They had no loot and hence could be convicted of no crime but failing to leave the area when ordered to do so by the Lord's Men on an earlier patrol. They were sentenced to dawn-to-sundown duty at the wheel.

As the brigands numbered 14, all the horses were unhitched from one wheel and the brigands alone - men and women, sweating together-were harnessed in their places, with cleverly knotted ropes tied about each of them and one other brigand to prevent them from pulling free of their places. Once word got around, many of the townsfolk turned out to watch and even bid for chances to switch the increasingly hot and exhausted brigands with twigs. Not one of the brigands lasted through the whole day until sundown. By eveningfeast only two warriors (who had recovered from being pulled by their fellows earlier) were left grimly plodding along, dragging the groggy, scraped, and bruised bodies of their fellows through the straw.

The brigands were revived, tended overnight, and in the morning put to work at the pull wheel again to finish their shifts. It took the weakest of them most of three days to accomplish one day's worth of shifts. When the punishment was done and they were freed, they all fled and have not been seen in Battledale from that day to this.



### Sarguth's Wheelworks

Wagonmaking, Wheelmaking, and Wagon Repairs

This shop does more than just make wheels. It is a fast, efficient assembly line where teams of skilled workers under the watchful eye of fat, shrewd, old Sarguth make, repair, and refit wagons. "While-one-waits" jobs are always steeply priced here (usually 25 gp per hour or morel, but the replacement of single wagon wheels at Sarguth's is cheaper than at the Hitching Post—and here the coins cover the lifting of your conveyance and installation of the wheel, whereas at the Post you simply come out with a wheel in your hands and some crippling work ahead of you!

I recommend a visit to this shop to any shopkeeper interested in how swiftly things can be made by many folk working together, each one skilled at one or two tasks. Such entrepreneurs should find it fascinating!

### Tantul's Old Tankard

Brewery



Tantul's, the local brewery, stands at the edge of its own barley fields and atop deep, cool wells that almost gush with water; little pumping is required. Here one can buy flagons, handkegs, or butts (cart-sized, and requiring at least six people to shift when full) of the thick, nutty-flavored local brew, Tantul's Dark. This stout is doctored with crushed berry juice and even more secret ingredients and is very much an acquired taste. Its spicy ropy thickness makes it almost a meal rather than a thirst-quencher!

If you like what locals call "proper Battledale beer," however, this is the place to

buy it. A flagon is 1 cp, a handkeg is 8 cp, and a butt is 1 gp. Do not expect prices less than twice that elsewhere!

The fat, lazy brewers here seem to partake liberally of their own wares and are rarely hurried into doing anything. I also noticed that huge wheels of cheese and black bread seemed to be lying on every handy surface ready for carving and eating with one's fresh-drawn tankard. I would have been happier if the waiting knives buried in the bread or cheese had not so often been adorned with an equally fat, lazy rat!

### Taverns Four Flying Fish

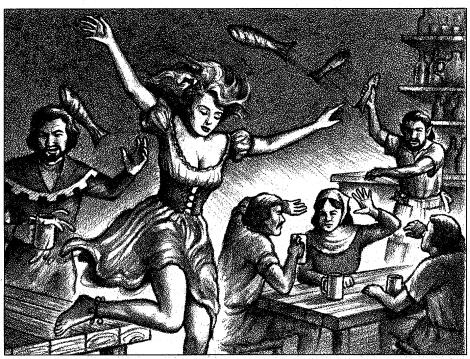
!! DD

The name of this dark, smoky drinking spot comes from a fight between the one-time proprietor and his wife. Business was slow and getting slower thanks to bad beer and a rougher clientele than other local tankard houses, so Baloout Ornysh unwisely told his wife Daera to stop waiting on tables and start dancing on them.

She refused in no uncertain terms, and said it would do more to bring in the louts if *he* danced on the tables instead! A fight developed and raged throughout the tavern—to the vast amusement of patrons—before it ended in Baloout's unconsciousness. During the festivities, he was struck in the face by no fewer than four (frozen!) thrown fish from his own larder.

Business has picked up over the years, and both of the taverns in town are now full from the time when roads grow hard enough to be used in spring to the first bad snows of winter. Through three sets of subsequent owners, however, the tradition of throwing fish has remained.





The Four (as locals call it) now does have hired dancers atop its larger and sturdier tables from time to time—but patrons who take liberties with them or who disturb the peace are likely to hear a shouted chorus of "Fish!" moments before a cloud of frozen and rather battered-looking longjaws strike them down. These fish are kept for the purpose and reused. It is popular in Essembra for folk who have no money to bet with to offer to eat the most shapeless longjaws from the Four if they lose.

This amusing tradition aside, travelers will find the Four to be very ordinary. Dim lighting in the Four conceals flies in the beer and a general unclean condition,

and no one stops customers from getting too drunk to hold in previous meals or keep their manners. The price of the beer -1 cp per talltankard with a free refill thrown in—keeps the place packed, however.

One hears a lot of muttering in dark corners as unsavory business is done here—but beware the doppleganger on staff (and on retainer to the war chancellor, whose friend he is), who can send an earstalk snaking along under tables to eavesdrop on talk that the participants no doubt think is safely private! This eavesdropper goes by the name of Eritt, and usually takes the shape of a silent, slackwitted, very petite wench.<sup>8</sup>

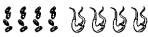
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Elminster: Eritt is the only shapechanging monster who holds official citizenship in Essembra. "She" once rescued Ilmeth's life during the war chancellor's adventuring days, and they fought side by side often until Ilmeth inherited the lordship of Essembra. Eritt still has rooms in Ilmeth's Manor and some folk in town whisper that this "weird man-eating monster" is the war chancellor's consort. I tell you here that the local belief about Ilmeth and Eritt is true. Do not attack the doppleganger, and she will not harm you. There is more to her tale and doings than should be revealed here.



The Four is currently owned by a couple from Daerlûn, the half-elven Taladar Snowstars and his human wife Ildaeryle. They regard Eritt as their best friend in the world. That is, overall, a good thing, because the doppleganger spends a lot of time helping to raise their two infant children.

#### lnns

The Green Door



Until Lashan of Scardale occupied Essembra and slaughtered most of the folk working at this establishment in search of the woman who tried to slay him when he commandeered her bed with her in it, the Green Door was the most riotous and notorious festhall in all the Dales. Its roaring parties and ribaldry, however, concealed its secondary role as a shrine sacred to Mielikki.

The Door is a place of pilgrimage for followers of that forest goddess because it stands on the site of a pool whose waters held visions sent to her faithful by her. These tranquil waters, now preserved in their own wooded backyard bower, are the real "Green Door," not the greenpainted front entry door that most folk think the establishment's name comes from.

The faithful say Mielikki appeared in person to the famous ranger Florin Falconhand here, and that it was Mielikki's hand that caused the three swordsmen who slew the ladies of the Green Door on Lashan's orders to wither like dead leaves and die horribly, desiccated into hollow husks. Worshipers of the Lady of the For-

est still come here for private reverence, and the proprietors still give them everything at half price.

Lashan's word, however, did what the most scandalized Dalesfolk could not: It ended the Green Door's reign as the foremost festhall in all the Dales. These days it is officially just an inn, though some say the permanent guests on the third floor provide the same escort services formerly so brazen and popular at the Door.<sup>9</sup>

The Door is run by four half-elven ladies. Elves and the half-elven are particularly welcome here. I met Lady Sharlee, one of the four, when I visited. She was both graceful and gracious, and she showed me around a house that is clean, simply furnished, and given over to quiet rest. Harping chambers have been set aside at the hearth end of each floor for people to meet and talk in, but the layout of the building provides no common dining hall or taproom. In a touch harking back to the true meaning of the inn's name, wall tapestries throughout the building display splendid forest scenes.

## Festhalls The Bold Banners

The house of the Bold Banners stands on Rauthauvyr's Road, its balconies looking out over the passing traffic. It is the most exclusive and expensive festhall in Essembra—and probably in all the Dales. The formerly wanton banners for which it is named are now tasteful pennants displaying the badges of satisfied past patrons who have consented to the use of their coats-of-arms as an endorsement.

 $<sup>^9</sup>$ Elminster: Of course they do. Why else would folk pay such prices to stay at what is a simple—if clean and quiet—inn?



The escorts of the house often take their meals out on the balconies—and the house bodyguards have instructions to keep the road watered in front of the festhall when necessary, so that no dust rises to sully them.

That careful attention to detail is typical of the kind, graceful owner and senior escort of the Bold Banners: the lady known as Belurastra. Her wits brought her house intact through a Zhentilar occupation during the Time of Troubles despite the Zhentarim mages making the Banners their personal home. Folk in Essembra believe she actually managed to slay the most powerful wizard, Spellmaster of the Sword of the South army, and survive. <sup>10</sup>

Under her reign, the Bold Banners has lost all trace of the bawdy, and become an exclusive inn and dining club whose heavily padded meeting rooms offer Essembrans and visitors their best venue for conducting private business—as well as pursuing private pleasures. As a result, entire floors of the Banners are often reserved for months or even years in advance by Sembian cabals who meet to do business behind closed doors here and unwind only afterward.

The sensitivity of some of the negotiations here—which have included quite separate but uniformly unsuccessful overtures by both Sembia and Cormyr to various Dales regarding the possible annexation of those Dales and meetings between Maalthiir of Hillsfar and Elminster of Shadowdale to establish just what behavior on the part of the former would and would not be tolerated by the latter—have made necessary a skilled and capable security force equivalent in training

and magical might to a very successful band of adventurers. On at least two occasions these house bodyguards have been reinforced by Harpers and by certain of the Knights of Myth Drannor, and they may well possess means of calling on their aid again. Disagreeing with the good swords of the house would not be a wise thing to do.

The menu of the Banners is varied and accomplished, with a small but judicious selection of wines fronting dishes whose minty or spicy side sauces need conceal no shortcomings in the cooking or portions. The ring of a bell brings swift personal service, or one can choose to dine with one's choice of a comely companion who both enjoys the meal with one and serves one with the viands throughout. After my stay, I must join the folk of the banners out front in recommending that all travelers on Rauthauvyr's Road, whatever their personal tastes in entertainment, patronize the Bold Banners just to see what good taste and wealth can do in presenting all patrons with quietly luxurious accommodations.

## The Lonely Mermaid

The oceanic theme of this house is hard to miss: Blue-green draperies are hung everywhere, interspersed with pedestals bearing marble miniatures of the striking life-sized sculpture that dominates the front hall: a mermaid rising from a wave with a longing expression and both arms outstretched to embrace the viewer.

Except for these sculptures and the plethora of very beautiful and well-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>And so she did, as recounted in the novel All Shadows Fled by Ed Greenwood (TSR, Inc., 1995).



dressed ladies wandering the halls with decanters and goblets in their hands, the Mermaid resembles the best inns everywhere. It is clean, brightly lit, and tastefully—if sparsely—furnished. Good meals (firmly in the "good hearty roasts" roadside inn style) are served in a dining room on the ground floor.

All festive activities take place behind discreet closed doors except in the cellars, where a spiral back stair leads down into the Mermaids' Grot, a spell-lit, lukewarm bathing pool where guests and staff can frolic. Here wine flows freely, and private bowers and dive-tunnels sprawl on all sides. There are even rumors that a real mermaid dwells down here in the dimmest depths and rises to embrace evil men or those who mistreat her staff members, dragging such miscreants



down to drown in her embrace. I questioned my hostess, Merilee Glesta, the Lady of the House, about this—but she smilingly turned my queries aside and gave me no straight answer.

## 

Thanks to its fanciful signboard, it is hard to miss this eatery in the outer walled "ward" of Essembra. (Who ever heard of blue stags with pegasi-like wings—or an elf deciding to wear not much more than a silly-looking winged helm and a sly expression when agreeing to ride such a thing, either?) The Elf is also the only place in town that whole families of local citizens can be seen trudging toward early on most evenings.

One might expect such a universally patronized place to serve good hearty food but to also be both crowded and noisy—and one would be right. The Elf is as wild as a busy market. Younglings run everywhere and throw food into all areas they have not yet disrupted. The din is terrific: Everyone bellows away at full blast, and metal dishes and tankards (wisely, they don't use anything else here) crash and clatter in the midst of it all in an almost continuous cacophony.

You share your board with whoever else wants to worm in beside you, here—and youthful patrons and frequent customers seem to take deliberate delight into breaking up groups or even separating married couples. As my nearest table companion remarked, "It's a bit like being in the midst of knights hacking away at other knights in full battle—only noisier."



The Silver Taproom

!!! 0000 JJ

The Silver Taproom is the most popular stopping place for travelers anywhere on Rauthauvyr's Road in Essembra. The Tap, as most regulars call it, specializes in swiffly serving ice-cold draft (or in winter, hot cider) and a meat-filled hand pastry meal to one's stirrup or wagonboard. Its popularity comes from the fact that folk with their coins ready can get food and drink in a trice and continue on to camp elsewhere by the roadside for free—or for a few silver pieces on a farm front outside of town.

### The Place

The Tap fronts on Battle Court and stands just outside the walled center of Essembra. Once an inn and later a fortified guardpost, it presents an impressive stone front to the road with a welcoming front archway flanked by two smaller entrances out of which the well-trained tavern staff leap to deal with wagons and riders pulling to a stop outside the gate. A mounting block assists patrons in getting down from their carriages and the staff in reaching those perched aloft.

Travelers who pull their wagons in beside the inn or surrender their mounts to the hostlers and go inside to enjoy "a sit by the Tap" with the locals find themselves in a justly popular, pleasant taproom. The room is hung with stag's heads and candlewheel lanterns, crowded with glossy-polished tables, and filled with folk goodnaturedly chuckling away over jests. The spirit of the place is warm and friendly,

and the taproom is attached to unusually large and well-lit jakes for both sexes and a few back rooms where drunkards can sleep off their disgrace in peace.

Upstairs are gaming rooms and rooms that can be rented for meetings at a flat 20 gp per night in season and 12 gp per night—plus 4 gp for firewood if the hearth is to be lit—in winter. Though one is not supposed to sleep overnight in these rooms, the staff members turn a blind eye to adventuring bands doing so—so long as they do not disturb the folk in neighboring rooms with weapons practice or similar excitements in the wee hours.

### The Prospect

The Tap offers hand meals—that is, pasties and filled buns that one can eat one-handed while drinking or riding with the other—and a small selection of good beers, from the local Tantul's Dark through Dragon's Breath Beer, Shadowdark Ale, Purple Dragon Ale, Archenwood Stout, and Bitter Black. Brandies, zzar, sherries, and a few white wines can also be had. These are priced by the tall-tankard or bottle according to availability. In cold weather,, hot cider and soup can be had by the talltankard, too.

The accent here is on getting what you order into your hands fast. To do this, the outside staff members employ leather-covered pitchers equipped with long pour spouts to dispense beer, and reach baskets (covered wicker bowls affixed to long poles) to lift hot buns, slabs of cheese, and hand pastries up to all customers. The inside staff members use covered pitchers to prevent sloshing, and chest trays to keep spills to a minimum—and they hustle!



### The Provender

Fare at the Tap is made on the premises. Roast fowl and stewed sauces are ladled into buns baked in the kitchens or pinched into dough with spiced potatoes, mustard, and cold cut roasts. The only form of hand food not served here is the sausage, because the owner, Roliver Thynd, has a hatred of sausages—or more precisely, of the cold, decaying lumps of fat and offal that his mouth found in the sausages that were fed to him when he was young.

The venison pies here are particularly fine, because the cooks toss powdered almonds into the red wine used in the simmer sauce. The venison soaks overnight in the sauce and is then simmered in it for the morning so that the pies can be baked and ready for early evening.

#### The Prices

All beer at the Tap is sold by the talltankard. It is 3 cp for Tantul's Dark, 4 cp for Dragon's Breath Beer and Shadowdark Ale, 6 cp for Purple Dragon Ale, and 1 sp for Bitter Black. Other beverages are priced by the talltankard or bottle and by the season except for cold tea, which is always 1 cp. In winter, hot drinks such as cider and soup—usually duck soup—are 1 sp per talltankard. Food pricing is simpler: 5 cp per pastry and 2 cp per bun in the winter, and 1 sp per pastry or 5 cp per bun in all other seasons.

### Travelers' Lore

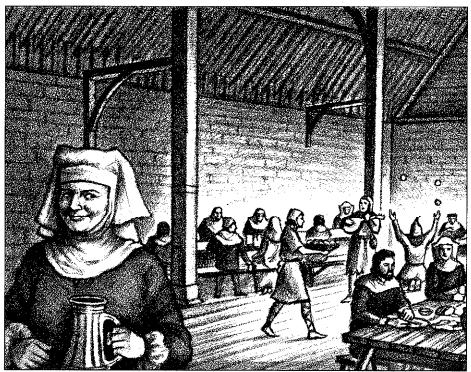
The reader may well wonder why I have covered such a mundane—if popular—place at length in these pages. The reason is the Curse of Anadar.

Anadar was a one-legged mage whose mobility was severely limited when he was not using a fly spell. As luck would have it. Lashan's forces rode into Essembra while Anadar was in his rented room at the Tap feverishly researching spells. Unable to move from his chair, he died there when a fearful invading warrior discovered him and his cat familiar and impaled them both on a spear that thrust through the chair and deep into a suit of partially enchanted armor on a stand behind it. A blue flame is said to have slowly consumed spear, armor, chair, cat, and wizard, as the transfixed mage gasped out a last agonized incantation-and the Curse of Anadar was born.

From that night on, random folk who drink anything inside the Tap are overcome with the Curse: Their wits leave them, ghostly armor seems to surround their forms, and they stalk toward the nearest human male warrior who served under Lashan, seeking to slay that man by any means. Some of the targets of people afflicted by the Curse have been brigands living in the woods near Essembra, others were successful merchants now flourishing in Scardale or Sembia – and a few have been mercenaries serving in Hillsfar or Zhentil Keep. The Curse cares not how distant or well protected Lashan's former soldiers may be. It simply selects one quarry, who does not change thereafter even if another former warrior of Lashan moves or is positioned closer to the curse victim, to die.

Sages say it is the limited, pain-filled mind of the familiar that drives victims of the Curse to slay in vengeance for the dead mage—and the remaining vestiges





of Anadar's sentience that keep the Curse's victim from walking off cliffs, charging into leveled weapons, and the like. Victims of the Curse cannot be roused from thrall or swayed from their mission by any known means, although the enchantment wears off by the next dawn or when they have slain their quarry. They take no notice of any folk save their quarry and any who attack them and stride along determined to deal death with whatever weapons are at hand, regardless of their own class and skills. Enthralled mages never employ their own spells, but Anadar does protect them after a fashion.

The shimmering armor that appears around those suffering from the Curse seems to lessen all physical damage

suffered by the cursed victim by half. It also intercepts any and all spells and magical fields of effect, harmful and beneficial, and converts them into a *flame strike* (just like the spell used by priests of many faiths) on the quarry if that being is within view of the Curse victim or onto a random being or item if the quarry has not yet been reached.

Various means to end the Curse of Anadar have been tried, but all attempts have been utterly without success. These days, the folk of the Tap just keep quiet about the Curse unless pressed for information in the presence of someone obviously afflicted by it and hope that each affected drinker is the last.



## The Watchful Eye

!! BBBB

This justly popular inn is a favorite stopover on Rauthauvyr's Road. Folk can easily find it by the large, open, lidless staring eye that looks down the road painted on each side of the inn, so that the inn seems to stare in both directions. The eye that faces south was liberally used for target practice by certain drunken cross-bowmen during Lashan's occupation and hence has a worm-eaten look.

### The Place

This large, half-timbered building looks like just what it is: a converted former manor house. The ground floor is made of stone and has arched casement windows whose shutters have been adorned with crude but striking silhouette carvings of dancing bears, leaping stags, charging boars, and running hares. Drainpipes lead down to huge rain barrels at many places along the walls. The barrels are big enough to bathe or sleep in, but beware: Some folk have been found drowned within them after sudden storms! Chimneys at either end of the angled building and at its bend (underlaid by the busy kitchens) keep folk warm in winter, and the building's large windows are opened in hot weather to let breezes blow through. Overall, the Eye is a solidlooking, welcoming place with good furnished rooms, even if it is a trifle sparsely and simply decorated.

At one time the Eye was home to the now-extinct Iskyl noble family exiled from Chessenta. The Eye still has the extensive storage cellars they dug out, including one, local lore whispers, that stretches out into the trees south of the inn and comes to the surface there. This long tunnel cellar allows certain folk to sneak in and out of the place without being seen, which is how the three beautiful daughters of the innkeeper escaped the hands of Lashan's soldiers.

These cellars formerly held great quantities of food and firewood against the harsh winters when the manor stood isolated in elven-held deep woods, kept the riches of the family safe behind concealed doors, and held the bones of fallen Iskyls. Some of the Iskyl riches-notably a chest of pearls "bigger than an ogre's eyeball&'-are still hidden down in the cellars in nowforgotten hiding places. The Iskyl crypt lies at the westernmost extent of the cellars under Rauthauvyr's Road. It has several times been afflicted with the rise of undead. The present owner of the inn does not discourage talk about these undead creatures in an effort to keep thieves from descending the many back stairs of the Eye to wander freely about the cellars.

### The Prospect

The Watchful Eye offers comfortable accommodation, to be sure, but its fame is built on the output of its kitchens. Housewives of Essembra line up at the serving shutters of the kitchens to take home the same thing that guests crowd into the dining room for: the best chicken and turkey pastries in all the Dales!

Folk come from all over Battledale to dine here from a menu that consists of little more than drink, various pickles, roast boar, venison, hare, sauces, and the famous pies. Not a few rich and haughty Sembians who hurry past the crude backlands of the Dales on their important travels between their own realm and the bustling cities of the Moonsea make a



point of stopping here to eat. Their expectations have led to small but steady improvements in the amenities offered to guests, so that the Eye has become a good—if not spectacular—hostelry.

The owner of the Eye, Chesduk Malrit, is a weary and bitter man today. The death of his wife a few winters back took all the life from him, it seems. He spends most of his time these days walking the woods and smoking his pipe and lends a hand with inn work only to repair chairs, tables, doors, boot jacks, and other wooden items that need work or replacement. Luckily for travelers, Chesduk's three daughters-energetic, laughing beauties who have grown adroit at resisting the blandishments of many smitten guests over the years-have taken over the running of the Eye without any formal agreement or arguments.

On my last three visits I recognized undercover Harper agents among the staff, and I suspect Harper assistance helped the daughters rebuff several Sembian highpressure offers to buy the Eye. More recent purchase overtures have come from the Darkwater Brand of Archendale, whose owners are most anxious to buy the inn, and from the Sword of the South, who wants the inn for his (or her) troops during their stays. I would not be surprised to soon learn of a daughter or two wedding Harpers in the future-but for the time being, Aleesha, Baernysse, and Lathyleea remain in the hopeful dreams of many travelers on Rauthauvyr's Road. And every

one of these women knows how to make the Eye's famous pies.

### The Provender

Though modesty forbids too much discussion of such things, 11 your scribe can claim several accomplishments in life, and one of these can only be delicately described as "a way with the ladies." It is my bound duty to assist the reader in every way, and it was with this diligent task in mind that I set out-armed with a bottle of the very best elverquisst, I might add—to learn all I could of the superb viands served in the dining room of the Eye from Lathyleea, the, er, most lonesome of the owner's daughters. It is with a humble mien<sup>13</sup> that I can report success. On the handwritten insert on the next page, then, is the simple recipe that has made the Eye famous.

As you can see, the recipe is rather straightforward. There must be some trick to the doing Lathyleea omitted telling me or some superb peculiarity of the local ingredients that makes the pies so special. I am also told by regulars that some gravy from the roasts and some tiny forest mushrooms sometimes find their ways into the pastry dough when Aleesha is running the kitchen—and that the pies are especially fine on such occasions.

### The Prices

Folk buying their meals through the window can expect to pay 7 cp per pie, or 5 cp per trencher (yes, a trencher is a thick

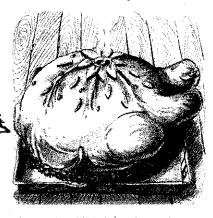
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Elminster: Insert derisive snort here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Elminster: I can only wonder what way he means here—the way to make women give polite or rude excuses to get rid of him?

Yi3 Elminster: Humble mien and a twinkle in the eye designed to make ye think he got more than just the single recipe out of her. Don't worry, he did not. I was watching the whole time in disguise. Lathyleea has better things to do than spend her evening listening to the honeyed words of some idiot who is actually proud of the name "Volo." The disguise spell was simplicity itself, and the elverquisst as good as always, but how women wear those tight-laced bodices I do not know.







1 large turkey (plucked, innards turned out, and head and Feet removed

1 turkey liver ( chop it fyne!)

1 end of old sausage

1 pour of brandy

1 handful goose innards (chopped fyne)

1 fist of butter 14 (let stand and soften)

1 end of leek or onion (chopped fyne!)

1 Finger 15 of ground black pepper

2 handfuls of salt

1 handful truffles (or black wrinkle Dale mushrooms)

1 pinch of sage

1 pinch of parsley

1 pinch of chives

1 egg (yolk only)

1 pour of milk

31/2 cups flour

4 knives 16 bacon fat

Cold water

Set first thy oven to warm with a goodly fyre. Let it be made hot and kept that way.

Do any chopping ye must to make the ingredients be as listed above, then take the liver and half the salt and pepper, as well as all the onion, sage, parsley, and chives, and mix them all in a bowl so that no single thing clumps together with itself, but all are mixed very well.

Take also the sausage, and chop it cold; overly fatly sausage is fyne — discard not the fat. Then mix it in with the rest, drizzling in the brandy as ye do so.

When all is mixed, spoon the mixture into the cavity of the turkey. If there is space to spare within, add extra mushrooms, onion strips, and potato peels to fill. Then truss up the bird with thread or fyne stryng. Place the bird in a roasting pan, brush it with the butter until it is all used, sprinkle it with the rest of the pepper, and salt it until ye have held back but a finger's worth.

Put the bird in the oven and let it roast whilst ye make the pastry.

Sift the flour, then add in the last finger of salt and sift again. Cut in the fat with a knife, and sprinkle the mixture sparkingly with cold water (use thy fingertips) until ye have added just enough to make the dough all hold together. Use the knife to mix it lightly.

Move the turkey to the lip of the oven to cook at a lesser heat while ye roll out the dough. Turn the pan around at least once during the rolling so that one syde be not burnt and the other cool.

<sup>15</sup>A finger of spice is a heap large enough to thinly cover the top of a cook's finger.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Elminster: Unsalted, of course. As I have said before, only barbarians salt their butter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>A knife is the amount of something sticky or gluey that will balance atop the blade of a goodly sized cook's knife. Elminster says that in our world, four knives is about one cup.



Flour thy board and roll out the pastry upon it until it the flattened dough is large enough to wrap around the entire bird.

Take the bird from the oven and let it stand until cool enough to handle. (While waiting, drink beer or cool minted water and wipe the sweat from off ye!) Then put the turkey in the center of the spread pastry and with thy knife pluck out the truss thread. Whap the bird entirely in the pastry, moistening its edges to pinch them properly and make a good seal. Then make a hole in the top of the pastry about as large around as they thumb to vent the steam and joices.

Set the encased bird upon a flat shield sheet to cook in the oven again, first brushing it all over with a mixture of the egg yolk and the milk stirred together in a bowl with the fingers. Bake until golden brown and crisp — and 'tis done!

If the pie is to be served forthwith, lay out three table bowls and cut the bird into pieces, letting the pastry break off and scooping out the stuffing into one bowl and the turkey and the pastry into the others. Serve with a poultry sauce if desired.

If the pie is to be eaten later, cook it until I the pastry is just beginning to show brown and then take it from the oven and place it in a covered tureen or great pot and take it to a cold cellar. When the pie is to be eaten, take it out and sprinkle it liberally with water, then heat it in the oven until golden brown and serve as said above.

slab of bread) of whatever roast is available. Prices in the dining room are 2 cp higher for each, and all drinks are 6 cp per talltankard or tallglass. The wine selection is good but very limited. A bed is 1 gp per night, a private room runs 2 gp per night, and a suite with private jakes and bath cost 4 gp per night.

### Travelers' Lore

Guests who slip the porters 3 cp can see the cellar door carved with the Iskyl arms: a shield, surrounded by ornate scrolls and bunting, whose Sky<sup>17</sup> is forest green and bears a bronze hawk in flight from low on the sinister toward high on the dexter. One talon of the hawk is manacled in silver, and from this manacle trail three links of silver chain, the last one broken open. The family motto is unreadable on

the door and has been lost with time in other records.

This pleasant coat-of-arms is said to be carved in miniature on many chests and coffers that held the Iskyl family wealth. One of these can be seen in a market hall in Ordulin, where it is now used to hold the ivory vote tallies used by merchant organizations, but most of the others are lost. These treasure chests still sit in dark places, local lore insists, holding the family wealth ready for the one bold (or lucky) enough to find them!

One local belief puts the largest treasure vault under the family crypt, accessible only through the false bottom of a coffin that houses the skeleton of a family foe slain at the manor when he came to seize an Iskyl maid and marry her by force. If this coffin exists, it has yet to be found by the Malrits.

 $<sup>^{17}</sup>$ Elminster: In thy world, ye would use the word *field* here instead of sky. In either case, what is meant is the background.



## Hap

This village is located off the good roads and at the base of Haptooth Hill, the best landmark for travelers cutting across country from Essembra and points north to Scardale, lower Featherdale, or Harrowdale. Scarcely more than a dozen major buildings stand amid the trees here, although more than a score of cottages belonging to woodcutters and herbgrowers are scattered along winding lanes that spread out in all directions from Hap's well and muddy open market.

Haptooth Hill rises like a gray-white tooth out of the oak, beech, and maple trees, towering above the village. Its southern face, above Hap, is almost a sheer cliff. Its summit is crowned by the ruins of a tower where a Red Wizard of Thay once dwelt surrounded by dragons! Many caverns and tunnels lie within the Hill, too. They are the abode of drow, who emerged to seize control of the village not so long ago!

Today, travelers find now drow-free Hap a peaceful place where acorn butter, carved carrying boxes and other woodwork, and pots of preserved herbs can be bought for resale elsewhere. The adventuresome still scale the northern and western flanks of Haptooth Hill in search of rumored treasure—and still go missing.

The law in Hap is War Watcher Elphron Pharlyn, a veteran officer in the Lord's Men of Essembra appointed to this post of judge and chief watch officer by Lord and War Chancellor Ilmeth of Essembra. Elphron has a staff of two men-at-arms and a messenger boy. He is a slow, even-tempered man whose

tolerance of small transgressions but firm upholding of the general peace has won him the grudging respect of locals; they come to his aid if he is challenged. Elphron reports all suspicious visitors and activities to Ilmeth via patrols from the Abbey of the Sword and through the Lord's Men, who swing through Hap every two or three days.

Adventurers inclined to laugh at the small staff of War Watcher Pharlyn, its provincial ways, or the apparent inability of Elphron to put teeth into his judgments are warned that he can issue a ban on entry or passage through Battledale that is enforced by the Lord's Men and by Abbey of the Sword patrols—a crippling prohibition to a traveling merchant who must use Rauthauvyr's Road. Halfaxe Trail is littered with the bones of merchants who were under such a Ban and tried to go around Battledale with cargo.

### PLaces or Interest in Hap Unique Sites

The Tower of Dracandros

Haptooth Hill is the stump of an old volcano. Its rock is iron hard, and its splendid natural location as a lookout has made it the site of a score or more keeps over the years, as each successive human lordling sought to make it his or her home. The last of these towers was the home of Dracandros, a Red Wizard of Thay who was involved in some way with a dracolich, Crimdrac (known for his belligerent aggressiveness, which was extreme even for a red dragon), several living dragons, and drow who



inhabited the echoing network of caverns inside the Hill.

Those evil beings are all dead now, slain by intrepid adventurers, and the tower lies broken open into rubble and ruin with dragon bones strewn around it. These bones have not yet been taken away for sale to alchemists or to be sold as trophies to Sembians who want others to think they are great dragonslaying heroes. This state of affairs is so because even after the wizard's death, an item he crafted continues to emit defensive magics<sup>18</sup> that have slain more than one band of adventurers who came looking for the treasure everyone says is here.

The top of the Hill is a wasteland of rubble inhabited by snakes and at least one leucrotta. Who knows what riches may lie buried on it in the remains of so many keeps? Of the caverns below, all I could find out when consulting adventurers who have explored the Hill and survived<sup>19</sup> is that the caverns do seem to descend into the Underdark, and along the way one passes through several caves full of fungi and one place where the drow found something that slew them by the dozens. Their bones still lie in the darkness, but no sign of what brought them their doom remains.

The closest that citizens of Hap come to the summit of the Hill is to a cavern on the north flank used by local farmer Hober Deljack to grow the strongtasting<sup>20</sup> black wrinkle Dale mushrooms. Hober will demand payment if you pick

or despoil his crops, as several adventuring bands have done—and War Watcher Pharlyn will support his demands. In so poor a community, the loss of a few coins' worth of produce is a serious affair.

### Shrine Lathander's Open Hand

Despite the tiny size of Hap this plain stone building is a bustling center of activity. It is both the center of schooling for local children and a popular meeting place.

All can see a sign of the Morninglord's favor inside the shrine: Aside from an altar, a few cots, and pews, the only furnishing in the high-windowed converted barn is the *Blood of Lathander*, a glowing piece of amber said to contain a few drops of the blood of the god locked away forever to aid the folk of Hap.<sup>21</sup> The *Blood* floats about 30 feet off the ground near the ceiling of the chamber and emits a faint rosy glow that can blaze up fiercely when Lathander approves or is roused to notice or act upon something.

Lathander is served by a new priestess, Dawnmaster Cathalandra Dovaer (who replaced the previous one, Mumfrey Mimly), and her obvious sincerity and energetic help with mending fences, clearing land, and even digging cesspits has won her the hearts of the village folk. I was nearly smitten myself. Pay her a visit if you want to be inspired by someone who is simple, earnest, and good.

strong smoky taste.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>The Crown of Dracandros is detailed in Appendix II.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Volo: I found them in the Fall of Stars adventurers' club in Harrowdale. It is a good place to learn about dangerous sites all over the Dragon Reach if you can learn to sort out the truth from all the wild tales of derring-do.
<sup>20</sup> Volo: I can only describe them as tasting like smoked corn—that is, roast corn kernels that have acquired a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Consult Appendix II for what Elminster could reveal of the powers of this item.



### Shops Delmuth's Barrel

General Store



This large, well-stocked general store is one of those fascinating structures that rambles up and down a few hillocks throwing out ramshackle wings in all directions and presenting the patron with a wild variety of roofing materials, building styles, and prospects—from about-to-fall-down to like-new-and-proud-of-it. Inside, Delmuth, the retired dwarven warrior, defends an incredible jumble of wares with deftly hurled axes and a gruff, almost bristling manner.

When I visited him, he was in the process of stacking all of the things that he had not sold in the last seven seasons into a new storeroom with the aid of two assistants. Like any dwarf, he was taking care to build the pile like a wall, fitting and wedging items just so. Those items may sit unsold for another seven summers, but they are now a very stable pile.

Delmuth sells wine, beer, zzar, and other beverages picked up at bargain prices in Sembia, but some of the hand-kegs looked suspiciously dusty to me. His wife Maerl also bakes fresh garlic buns every morn, which causes a line to form at his shop when the noses of everyone in the village tell them the buns have been set out to cool. Delmuth himself makes saveloy for which he is justly famous from the output of his hog farm. It tastes like a gift from the gods—even when used as iron rations a winter or so after it was made!

Delmuth will never surrender his secret and highly prized recipe—but I did not even ask him for it: Saveloy is dried,

highly spiced pigs' brains sausage! Just eat it, enjoy, and do not think about what is inside it.

True to its name, Delmuth's shop does sell barrels, mostly old but well-sealed ones of various sizes. Some of the barrels have interesting legends branded into them: "Maidens' Breath Beer/Too Light to Be Good for You!" or "Old Bladderwort Beer/It's Sure to Grow on You." All-in-all, Delmuth's is an establishment that is fun as well as useful to the wayfarer.

## **Glarth's Anvil** *Blacksmith*



Glarth endures endless ribbing from Delmuth because he is not a dwarf and therefore cannot be any good as a smith in the dwarf's oft-voiced opinion. I found this slow, baby-faced giant of a man to be an adequate blacksmith, however, with a talent for doing rough but sturdy work surprising in so small a community. He is capable of constructing whole wagon wheels from scrap metal, for instance, or turning 16 shields into a watertight, if crude, boat.

One of the local men-at-arms working with War Watcher Pharlyn sports a suit of armor made by Glarth. Although it resembles a clanking kitchen tree of pots and pans with various overlapping plates only loosely laced together, it seems to do the job: The man proudly showed me dented parts of the metal that he claimed were the marks left by an owlbear's beak just before he beheaded it. This smith is nothing to travel here for—but could be useful indeed to a traveler needing repairs, even for surprisingly ambitious jobs.



## Haestar's Woodworks Woodcutter



Haestar is the local sawyer. He turns rough-felled trees brought in by less skilled woodcutters into boards, posts, shingles, barrel staves, and kindling. His place is a wild litter of sawdust, shavings, and warped pieces of wood, hanging or leaning everywhere. Haestar and four strapping assistants wield two-man back-and-forth saws so fast you can hear the wood scream as it is cut. During my visit a woodcutter brought in a cart of duskwood trunks—and before nightfall Haestar had turned it into a cart full of dressed boards.

The only finished furniture Haestar makes is tables. He is very proud of those out back that his men use for their highsun meals. Haestar does age wood, smoke it for extra strength, and soak it to bend it, too—but he charges steeply for such work, preferring straightforward cutting to all else. The traveler may find the twin barrels of whittled wooden pegs and split kindling that stand on either side of the door to alone be worth the trouble of a visit

### INN & Tavern The Millery Inn

!!! BB

The Millery Inn is run by Silas Genk, who serves as its bartender and the village's meister, a sort of ombudsman for the local people. Hap's only inn survives by doubling as a rooming house for local citizens too poor to own land. They dwell on the upper floor while the cooler, more spacious rooms on the



ground floor are left for paying guests. A stay here costs 8 sp per night, but this includes stabling, a bath (if desired), the washing and repair of your clothing by the staff (they will ask if you want this service and your preferences), the cleaning and polishing or waxing of footwear, and all meals. (The roasts are a trifle too salty, and everything else is bland, bland, bland.) Drinks are extra; it costs 4 cp for a tankard of anythingand I mean anything: Wine and zzar are brought to you in tankards, too! A large common room on the ground floor doubles as dining room and taproom-and is rarely without a visiting minstrel. Overall, the Millery Inn is a simple, adequate wayhouse that serves filling but unexciting food-a stolid but uninspiring, workaday place to stay.







# Daggerdale



f the gods were more disposed to smile on the Dales, this pretty wooded Dale (once known as Merrydale before a tragic

infestation of vampires changed its people's character) could well be the most popular destination for hunters in all the Dragon Reach. Its rolling hills are only lightly settled and teem with game of all sorts. Streams and unspoiled ponds are everywhere, and one can see in this pleasant land many ferny bowers, caverns, and picturesque ruined cottages.<sup>1</sup>

Over its many years of occupation of Daggerdale, the hand of Zhentil Keep has left its mark on the Dale, but the future for once finally shows a glimmer of hope and prosperity. After battling the Zhents for more than 30 winters, Randal Morn is once again lord of Daggerdale.<sup>2</sup> The folk of this Dale are slowly working toward establishing themselves as an autonomous Dale-all the while casting a wary eye toward the crumbled walls of Zhentil Keep. While many adventurers are still found wandering the roads and vales of Daggerdale, the eyes of the Daggerdalesmen hold a glint of hope-hope that Daggerdale can rule itself once again, hope that they will be able to defend themselves when Zhentil Keep rebuilds itself, and hope that Zhentarim spies will grow bored and leave the Dale in the interim. Obviously, some hopes are more realistic than others.

Orcs, hobgoblins, and bugbears—former mercenary troops of Zhentil Keep now left to their own devices—roam the Dale freely, though they and the reformed Freedom Riders of Dagger Falls come to blows on an increasing basis. In addition, Randal Morn has sent various bands of adventurers out into the Dale to secure trade traffic along the Tethyamar Trail. Still, a lot of monsters roam the Dale, and travelers are advised to travel with a weapon at the ready.

Adventurers looking for fame and glory can encounter packs of wolves, leucrotta, and owlbears lurking in the woods and waiting for someone to venture within reach. Human outlaws also skulk about the Dale, and these people still tell tales of finding dopplegangers in their midst, spotting beholders drifting across Dale meadows, or spying even worse monsters prowling the feet of the Desertsmouth Mountains. In the deepest woods, spiders and stirges swarm over all intruders, and as the years have passed, the woods and its underbrush vegetation have grown to reclaim more and more of once-fair Daggerdale, choking ponds and valleys that once held farms until treacherous swamps and dense thickets remain. Giant wasps and similar pests have been recently seen in Daggerdale for the first time.

While Daggerdale is governed once again by the Morn family, the outlying

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A map of Daggerdale showing most settlements and points of interest is found in the section on Dagger Falls later in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Randal regained Daggerdale late in the Year of the Serpent (1369 DR), as told in the trilogy of adventure modules, the Sword of the Dales, the Secret of Spiderhaunt, and the Return of Randal Morn by Jim Butler.



areas of the Dale are still ruled by the law of the sword. Randal Morn's Freedom Riders and mercenary bands are slowly driving monsters away from frequently traveled trails and roads, but a vast majority of the Dale is fit only for women and men who follow fortune and wield a mean sword or spell. Few coins can to be had in Daggerdale by such adventurers, however, unless they are lucky enough to find old ruins or a cache of Zhent-buried gold. The rebuilding of Daggerdale - and Dagger Falls in particular - is perhaps where the greatest adventure awaits. Women and men who are confident in their abilities to run farms, inns, and other businesses will ultimately decide the fate of Daggerdale, replenishing or ultimately bankrupting the depleted treasury of Randal Morn.

## The Countryside

Daggerdale is all rolling wooded hills and small, labyrinthine valleys broken by rocky crags and tors and here and there by meadows left in the wake of wildfires caused by storm lightning. Large settlements and steadings are not to be found here; rather, folk huddle in small stockaded villages and farm only within running distance of the walls, scratching out a living in this perilous land. Often they construct pitfall traps to battle marauding monsters—and these can slay unwary travelers just as well as a deliberate attack.

Many of these holds are abandoned or stand empty after the inhabitants lose their struggles with winter cold, disease, or the predators. Wayfarers are warned that other stockades are now home to monsters, some of whom keep human captives as food, playthings, or as lures to bring in more human prey.

Savage and persistent monster attacks reduced the last heavily armed merchants' foray into Daggerdale that I accompanied to a few battered folk who in the end were forced to turn back. I cannot stress this strongly enough: Unless you are eager for deadly adventure, venture not into the Dale very far from Dagger Falls. Within the rest of the Dale awaits deadly danger, but with that danger abides the potential for wealth for those who would dare to tempt fate.

## The Daggerðalesmen

Daggerdalesmen (a term used regardless of their actual gender) are hunters who use slings, crossbows, and spears or blades and hurled axes for in-close fighting. They are also farmers, though for safety reasons in recent years keeping sheep and goats has largely supplanted growing crops. Some see Daggerdalesmen as a cruel, surly, suspicious people who deserve or have earned their monstrous neighbors. This outlook is hardly fair; how else could any survivor in such a land become but ready-armed, quick to strike, and wary? Nevertheless, it is wise when approaching a hold in this Dale to call out one's name and business-and then let fall a shield or a light-hued cloak and slowly drop all carried weapons onto it so that any watchers can see that one approaches the gates empty-handed.



## Anathar's Dell

Inn

!! BBBB

This little-known inn occupies one of the many nameless valleys in southern Daggerdale. Since knowing its whereabouts could well save the lives of beleaguered travelers, know then that Anathar's Dell lies just southwest of the red-topped crag that rises into the sky halfway between the northern tip of the Spiderhaunt Woods and Serpentsbridge, where the Tethyamar Trail crosses over the Dagger River (as the western Ashaba is sometimes known).

The Dell is the only known above-ground holding of the Brightblade dwarves, who have rich silver mines far below the surface here. The mine shafts are concealed by the barns of the self-supporting farm that fills the valley, a collective farm worked by the Blacklock and Talop human families and the Snowgold and Winterwood half-elven families.

Dozens of relatives seem to work about the farm secure in the knowledge that their borders are defended against monsters by 10 or more trained hunting cats. These seemingly extreme intelligent giant tigers were gathered or transported from I know not where as cubs, but they have been reared here in utter loyalty to the farm families. These "fangs," as the folk of the Dell call them, attack any nonhumans or demihumans who approach the farm. If the battle goes against the cats, one flees

back to the Dell to raise the alarm. If they sight humans or demihumans entering the valley, one comes to Tall Oak, a tree-house at the eastern end of the Dell where one of the farm family elders keeps watch, for instructions. The fangs understand the commands: "attack," "stay clear," "follow and see," or "escort but do not harm."

The dwarves have equipped the farm folk with weapons and armor (a mixture of types from chain mail all the way to full plate) to spare. Whatever their sizes, visitors willing to fight in the Dell's defense can be fully equipped for battle and if they acquit themselves well, they are typically asked to keep the gear they have used. Several apparently friendly bands have reached the heart of the Dell and then attacked, but the farm families have dealt with them somehow without taking harsh casualties, so they probably have other, still-secret defenses.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to raising poultry and pigs, the folk of the Dell plant all manner of food crops. They do their own curing and smoking of meat and keep massive pantry cellars full of staples, grain, and produce (and free of rats and mice with the aid of a large cohort of small cats). They are able to feed the folk of many other nearby holdings as well as paying guests who stay in the small circle of cottages in the Dell orchards and dine in Anathar's Hall at the center of the ring. (Apples are free for the taking.)

Anathar was a mage who came to Daggerdale long ago. On the spot where the dining hall (an open, pavilion-with-kitchens affair) named for him now stands, he built a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster: Among these defenses is sleep gas. Containers of this swift-acting gas developed and furnished by the dwarves are placed everywhere around the Dell, masquerading as water pots, vases, lamps, and like. If they containers are broken or opened, the gas causes most beings to fall senseless in a breath or two. (A successful saving throw vs. poison at a -3 penalty must be made every round for 1d6 rounds or the victim falls unconscious for 1d4 turns. One container full of gas fills a cube roughly 30 feet square on a side—or a 30-foot-diameter sphere—when opened; the actual volume may be larger or smaller depending on the size of the original container.) All of the farm folk are immune to this effect after years of exposure.



small tower near the existing dwarven mine. He offered to defend the dwarves with his magic should they be in need and provide them with ready food and protection for the top of their mine shaft<sup>4</sup> if they in turn agreed to allow him to found a farm where elves, humans, and halflings could dwell and work together. The dwarves agreed only reluctantly but were delighted with the results until a dragon descended on Anathar's Tower and tore it apart.

The wizard perished even as he slew the wyrm. Many of the farm folk fled or were killed, but the dwarves built the survivors a stout stone stronghouse still to be seen under the largest barn here and asked them to stay. The descendants of that first farm are the families still here today, and Anathar's Dell still provides a refuge in southern Daggerdale in these times of rebuilding.

Guests at the Dell find their accommodations simple but cozy. All guests have a private guesthouse with a handpump-filled bath large enough to share with a lounging partner. A bite to eat or drink can be had at all hours by wandering over to Anathar's Hall, ample water and weak wine are provided in each cottage, and main meals are laid on at dawn, highsun, and sunset. Guests are free to walk in the valley but horseback riding should be confined to the orchard fields. Guests can also play lawn games, sleep, or take weapons practice in the upmeadow north of the Hall. Paying visitors may stay as long as they wish at a price

of 2 gp per head per day, which includes all drinks, meals, and services such as stabling and even bedside care, if needed.

Most guests quickly notice a lot of visitors strolling informally into and out of the valley. Some are prospectors bringing in the raw emeralds they have mined in the Dagger Hills<sup>5</sup> for sale, and others are Harpers who have come to check on the safety of the Dell and to buy these emeralds and the 25gp-value silver trade bars sent up from the depths by the busy dwarves for sale and trade in the wider Realms. The Harpers pay in coins, magic, seeds, and whatever else the folk of the Dell need. As part of the trade bargain, they serve these farmers as fetchand-carry transport of the goods they require and run news and errands to other steadings in Daggerdale, too.

Thieves and brigands are warned that dirty work undertaken at the Dell earns instant attack from the farm folk and their cats, the dwarves from below, and any Harpers within reach—and that Those Who Harp track down and enact appropriate justice (whether rough or civil) on any who escape, patiently following the trail for as long as need be. Since large foraging bands of hobgoblins, bugbears, orcs, and similar predators could live for two winters or more on the food in Anathar's Dell, the Harpers have deliberately spread word of the strong, Harper-reinforced defenses of the Dell in the Dales and the Moonsea to discourage such bands from being tempted to strike at so rich a prize.

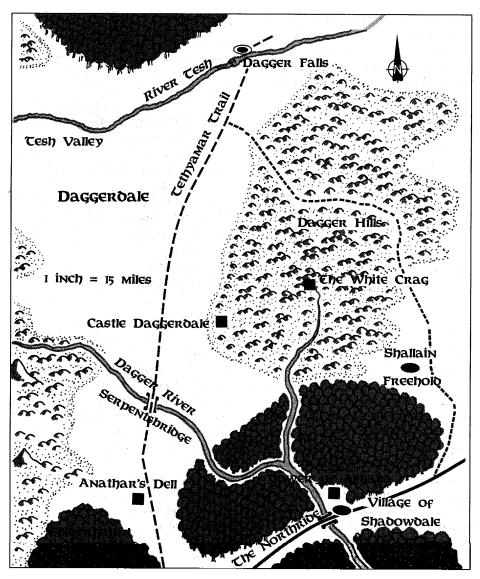
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>A favorite goblin tactic in those days was to roll boulders down a mine shaft and then go down to dine on the smashed dwarves below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>The rocks of the Dagger Hills are studded with emeralds. Mining them is an age-old, dirty, and deadly occupation of hewing out crawl-tunnels to reach the veins of gem-bearing ore and fighting off monsters, brigands, and competitors alike. Dagger folk and others desperate for wealth have always gone to the bramble- and monster-rich heart of the Hills to try their luck because the emeralds are so close to the surface that anyone lucky enough or well-informed enough can recover them. An experienced miner with good strength and an eye for where to dig can gather enough emeralds in a day to shallowly fill his cupped hand, though most of them will not be of gem grade. Most will be smaller than the little fingernail of a human infant in size, but the occasional stone as big as an eyeball turns up.



# Dagger Falls

This village is the only dependable haven against the depredations of monsters and brigands to be found in Daggerdale today. The town of Dagger Falls remains a resupply center for all intelligent inhabitants and wanderers through the Dale and probably survived being overrun and pillaged for years for this reason. Only 800 or so folk call Dagger Falls home, many buildings in town lie empty, and most of the outlying hamlets where Dagger Falls was wont to expand





(south along the Tethyamar Trail and east down the River Tesh) have been abandoned, though the town is showing signs of filling up again now that Randal Morn is back.

Always the largest settlement in the Dale, Dagger Falls began as a trading post and storage site for dwarven metals being shipped downriver. All cargoes destined to go down the River Tesh had to be unloaded from barges above the deadly falls and reloaded onto other craft below. Humans and other folk wanting to trade with the dwarves took to coming to the site of the future Dagger Falls community once the Stout Folk had fortified the transshipment facilities that were the birthplace of the village enough to discourage raids. (The dwarves thereby gained enough sense of security that they no longer tried to slay all nondwarves they saw in the vicinity.)

Soon after the fall of Teshendale, the forces of Zhentil Keep slew or drove out all folk of power and influence in Daggerdale and occupied Dagger Falls. They installed a local lord of their own choosing, Malyk. When he perished with most of his garrison under the blades of Randal Morn, the rightful lord of the Dale, and the heroes Florin Falconhand of Shadowdale and Mirt and Durnan of Waterdeep, the Zhents marched an army into Daggerdale and installed a constable to enforce their rule instead.

For years, Dagger Falls was a place of treachery, beatings, night murders, and torture—and although Zhentil Keep has fallen and the city has Randal Morn to rule it, not all Zhentarim have been flushed from the city. The most obvious of Zhentarim agents were driven from the

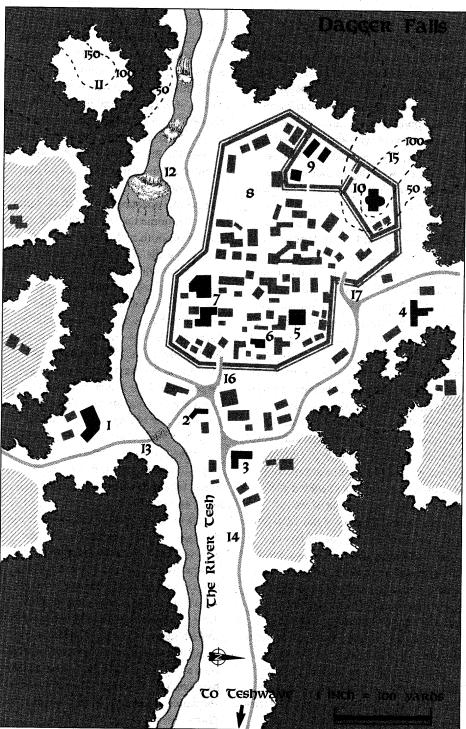
## Dagger Falls Map Key

- 1. The Teshford Arms (inn)
- **2.** Dulwar Leatherworker (leather goods shop)
- **3.** Fulgath's Caravan Supplies (caravan goods store)
- 4. The Red Rock (tavern)
- **5.** Lathander's Light (temple of Lathander)
- 6. The Broken Dagger (tavern)
- 7. Thund's Warehouses (rental storage)
- 8. The market square
- **9.** Freedom Riders' Barracks (also current home of Randal Morn)
- **10.** The Constable's Tower (haunted partial ruin)
- **11.** Eagles' Eyrie (lookout point and caverns)
- 12. Dagger Falls (not navigable)
- 13. The Tethyamar Trail
- **14.** The Tesh Trail
- 15. The Spur
- 16. The River Gate
- 17. The Forest Gate

city at first light following the fall of the Zhentil Keep constable, Guthbert Golthammer (who was transferred to the village from his previous post in Teshwave). The more shrewd—and hence more dangerous—agents remain in the city, undoubtedly reporting Randal Morn's every move to interested Zhentarim wizards and priests.

Dagger Falls was lucky that there were few Zhent mercenaries in town at the time of Guthbert Golthammer's demise. Lack of pay and regular food convoys had forced all of the vagabonds to leave town, foraging across the Dale or seeking better places of employment, such as the







increasingly violent mining country around Glister.

Although the defeat and withdrawal of Zhent forces has meant that coins are a lot scarcer in the streets of Dagger Falls and that most of the camp followers, weaponsmiths, armorers, and other skilled craftsfolk who accompanied the Zhents have also left, the taste of freedom has allowed Daggerdalesmen to trust each other far more than they have dared to do for decades. They have seized this opportunity and are using it to build and rebuild freely. Devotees of Lathander have even finally restaffed and begun rebuilding the local temple of Lathander, which had burned down mysteriously during the Zhent occupation. (Efforts at its renewal were previously plagued by a series of strange and unlikely "accidents.") However, Dagger Falls is still a rough frontier town, lacking many amenities and featuring a populace quick to lash out at real or suspected troublemakers, but at least a wayfarer in need can now get supplies, hire aid, and find a refuge in which to sleep or recuperate without too much fear of awakening as a shackled slave about to begin a grueling overland march down the banks of the Tesh into sale and servitude (the usual fate of undesirables the Zhents did not find it wiser to slay on the spot). Weapons are openly worn in the streets and Daggerdalesmen expect everyone who has come from outside the walls to be armed, so the traveler must use extreme caution when in town.

Sources who have been in Dagger Falls recently say that local businesses are opening up with rapidity, so the traveler may well find changes to what is related hereafter. In brief, Dagger Falls is a small, walled town of stone buildings with steep slate roofs. (Steep roofs are necessary since snow loads can be fearsome during winter.) Its streets are cobbled in some places and dirt or corduroy elsewhere, and it lies just northwest of Dagger Ford where the Tethyamar Trail crosses the River Tesh in shallow safety below the falls. The only inn to be had that is not in the main a tavern or a longterm rental apartment in a loft or cellar of a town home lies beside the Tethyamar Trail south of the ford, well outside the town walls. A handful of working farms surround the town, and the settlement itself climbs from the River Gate up a slope to the northwest, where two fortified areas defend the Freedom Riders' barracks (also the current abode of Randal Morn) and the Constable's Tower. The Tower, once a dwarven catapult redoubt and later a succession of robber baron's keeps and strongholds, overlooks the rest of town from its height atop the Spur, a flat-topped tor that is exceeded in height locally only by the Eagles' Eyrie to the south (across the Tesh), which has seen use as a lookout since ancient times.

It is too early to say if Daggerdale is on the right road to recovery or if Dagger Falls will rise to achieve the stability and prosperity of other centers in the Dales, but it is a place where change is being allowed to occur at last—and most of those changes are at least strivings for something better. Folk in the Dales are trying (via daring traveling merchants) to keep an eye on Dagger Falls. What befalls here could well herald the future of the Dalelands in the wake of the ruin of Zhentil Keep.



## Places of Interest in Dagger Falls Unique Sites

The Constable's Tower

This once-isolated keep has been rebuilt repeatedly until what remains today is a forbidding-looking, round, crenelated tower standing three tall floors above the ground and larger across than any single fortified tower between the Citadel of the Raven and Cormyr. Two rickety wooden gallery wings thrust out to the east and west. They are sheathed rather sloppily in slate shingles and old, rusting shields and scrap metal plates to make them as fireproof as possible. These wings end in balconies and are where all of the retainers and lady escorts dwelt in the days when Zhentil Keep occupied Dagger Falls in great numbers and planned to make of it a Zhentish realm extending from Tilverton (and, ultimately, Hullack Forest and whatever else could be seized from Cormyr) east to the Standing Stone and Hillsfar.

In the days of Zhentish occupation, the cellars and dungeons of the Tower were full, and some inevitable rumors even speak of them connecting to the Underdark via tunnels that also allowed Zhent slavers to hustle captives out to the River Tesh unseen. Supposedly these tunnels even linked up with the cellars of the temple of Lathander, which was burned down, some local tales insist, after the priests lost a vicious spell battle in the dark spaces under the streets of the town

against Zhentarim mages on one hand and drow boiling up out of the Deep Realms on the other!

These days, the Tower's wooden wings are left to roosting birds except for limited service as increasingly shaky places to hang laundry. Once-deadly ballistae and mangonels stand rotting, rusting, and idle on the broad roof of the central keep, and the apartments, armories, and great hall within it lie empty—save for fell magic.

It is not known precisely what is going on in the Tower, but some sort of strange, deadly cycle of magic holds sway in here. It seems to have been first encountered after Ilthond was killed by the demishade Gothyl.<sup>6</sup> (Ilthond was the mage who occupied the tower after Tren Noemfor, the first Zhentish constable.) The effect is something that most mages of Faerûn would be very interested to see: Within an all-pervasive mist, a wild variety of destructive spells lash out within the Tower. Fire, lightning, shapechanging, frost, and similar forces rock the keep continually and slaughter folk foolish enough to step inside, but in this swirling chaos these forces are countermanded by just as energetic rebuilding and mending magics. Some of these renewing magics seem to have kept the Tower from flying apart or collapsing in the magical struggle that has gone on for at least a season now. This titanic unleashing of forces can be detected in the town below only by the occasional flash of light or tremor, but some people claim it is beginning to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>As told in the adventure module *The Return of Randal Morn* by Jim Butler.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Tren left Daggerdale, was transferred out by his superiors, or was killed. Events are unclear and difficult to determine since Dagger Falls inhabitants do not answer questions about the man, merely spitting in the dirt at the mention of his name while grumbling under their breathes. Tren was the constable during the events of the adventure module *Doom of Daggerdale* by Wolfgang Baur.



emit drifting areas of wild magic and may ultimately force the abandonment of Dagger Falls itself!

At least a half dozen powerful archmages (including, it is said, Vangerdahast of Cormyr) have investigated the Tower and either perished or fled its interior in precipitous haste, unable to stop or escape the effects of the cycle. Such forays may grow fewer as the wild magic areas make visits to Dagger Falls more deadly for wizards, but until then I predict that tourism in the form of visiting wizards is going to grow more brisk in town-another good reason for honest merchant folk to avoid Daggerdale! Randal Morn thinks that the effect is either a by-product of the demishade Gothyl's death or proof that Gothyl is not dead but somehow trapped in the Constable's Tower.

Randal wants this disturbing effect gone from the Tower because of the magical problems it is causing and because he wants to take over and renovate the keep, using it as the initial tower in a new castle for the ruling family of the Dale. Randal is offering to immediately grant titles and an estate, along with a future reward of 5,000 gp to be presented in five years, to any person or adventuring band who can prove they have cleansed the Tower of this bizarre problem.

Eagles' Eyrie

This splendid natural lookout is a bare rocky knoll rising well above the town. It provides a natural firing platform for assaults on the Constable's Tower or anywhere else in Dagger Falls. These days it is guarded constantly by some of

Randal Morn's loyal Freedom Riders, battle-hardened and wood-wise warriors and rangers who are always vigilant and have a score or more of ready-loaded crossbows with which they can fell intruders who fall afoul of their alarm tripwires. They dwell in caverns beneath the summit, one of which has watch windows very well hidden among the cliff-face rock. Observers inside the apparently deserted Eyrie have a good view of the falls and the Tethyamar Trail.

Visitors to the heights of the Eyrie are few. The always-tough climb up the crumbling sides of the knoll has been made deadly indeed by several collapses of the spiral trail and by a colony of intelligent mimics who occupy some of the gaps, aping rock ledges. Smart enough not to attack either Randal's garrison or dwarves of the Brightblade clan who sometimes come here and feed them, these monsters strike at all other climbers. Prey able to fight back is dumped into probably fatal falls down the cliff onto the rocks below and eaten later.

Nothing crowns the Eyrie these days but the stones of a long-fallen watch-tower and a beacon fire laid ready to signal Randal if an approaching army is spotted. The stones are kept ready in a pile to be rolled down the path or fired away by means of a siege engine. Three disassembled catapults and a mangonel are kept in the caverns.

Most folk in Dagger Falls know that monsters lurk around the Eyrie, and that the place has something to do with the dwarves. Dagger Falls inhabitants recall wyverns, beastmen, trained hunting eagles, ropers, and stirges as having



infested the knoll in the past if they are questioned on the topic. Few remember that the Eyrie was once a dwarven stronghold guarding busy dwarven trade routes or, for that matter, that humans and dwarves once dwelt happily together in Dagger Falls before the bitter feud between House Morn and the Brightblade clan developed.

Randal Morn, assisted by the Harpers, has been trying to end that feud. One of the results of these efforts is that Brightblade dwarves come to the hidden, inner caverns here from time to time to visit the graves of the clan chieftain and elder priest, who were slain here by the evil Morn Mage-Lord, and the Altar of the Last Stand, dedicated to Dumathoin. The two dwarves' tomb is a cairn watched over by an animated war hammer, and a rich array of gems left at the altar in homage to Dumathoin are guarded by special alarm spells. If these spells are triggered, Randal Morn's forces here are notified. As they charge to the defense of the altar, they sound a horn that in turn alerts Harpers and dwarves in Dagger Falls that the altar has been violated. Thrice now humans have defended the altar against thievery, and once it has cost the life of a Daggerdalesman; the new friendship between humans and dwarves in the Dale is growing firm.

Reliable dwarven sources assure me that although exploratory delves were made into the heart of the Eyrie, no gems or metal of worth were ever found. Persistent rumors of rich lodes in the Dagger Falls area are mistaken and are probably fueled by the old saying (whose origin has been forgotten): "Seek out gems under wyvern's claw; silver waits by dragon's

maw." What is found in great numbers west of the town are edible blackwrinkle Dale mushrooms (in the deep woods) and blackberries (at the trees' edge all along the upper Tesh).

#### Freedom Riders' Barracks

The former Zhent barracks compound, a walled area that served as a stronghold for Zhent mercenaries and military, now serves the interests of Randal Morn and his Freedom Riders, the new law in Dagger Falls. Randal Morn lives behind the high walls of the compound as well, meeting with business leaders, adventurers, and common folk as he tries to set matters right after years of Zhent occupation.

Getting an audience with Randal is a simple process only if one enjoys dealing with bureaucrats. Townsfolk in Dagger Falls still claim that both Elminster and Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun were present at the liberation of the village, and I am certain that Elminster provided copies of his own mountains of paperwork so that Randal would have something to create his own forms with. Yet, getting an audience with Randal Morn is still easier than visiting an eccentric old wizardand there is not as much pipe smoke in the air, either. I have heard rumors that magic does not work in the audience chamber, but no one has confirmed this for me. To be truthful, I never got to meet Randal Morn, but the townspeople claim that he has been fair and just since he took power.

The ranks of the Freedom Riders have been swelling since Randal's return as more and more townsfolk make the decision to cast their lot in with Randal. The compound still holds



plenty of room for the troops, though, and once the old Constable's Tower is cleaned out, the military can spread itself out a bit more. Assuming the Tower can be cleaned out, of course, for I note with some degree of irony that neither Khelben nor Elminster bothered to "clean up" the Constable's Tower before they left Daggerdale.

#### The Market Square

A key element in the rebuilding of Dagger Falls into a stable, pleasant place to dwell is the availability of a variety of goods for local citizens to buy-and not just at the inflated prices that Fulgath charged unchallenged for so long, either. With that in mind, the rebuilt temple of Lathander has been busily sponsoring any peddlers from outside the Dale and enterprising Daggerdalesmen alike to open and stock stalls here. In this sponsorship, the temple has even established the Morning Shields, a "pay-per-use" mounted escort band of armed and battle-hardy Dagger Falls residents, to safely bring wagons of produce from outlying Dale farms here to sell their goods.

All of this has made this formerly pitiful market into a bustling place every tenday or so and an adequate place for the undemanding visitor to browse, though in Sembia such a selection could be bettered in many single shops and considered a bad joke when viewed as the market of any town. The local merchant Fulgath is suspected of several early acts of vandalism and theft that plagued stallkeepers when the renewal of the Falls market began, but he was caught setting a fire under a wagon of potatoes one night by some of the Lathanderian priests. He had to pay a fine

and endure a private audience with the High Radiance of the temple—and the market's troubles abruptly ceased.

# Temple Lathander's Light

This large, solid square stone building sports a new tiled roof, but its walls still bear the scars of the many fires that beset it when Dagger Falls was in the hands of the Zhentarim. It now houses a new contingent of Lathanderian priests and warriors who have come here from all over the Inner Sea lands to where they see a real chance to serve the Morninglord by fostering new growth and renewal where it is really needed. Inside the temple, conditions are still primitive and simple cots, stools, and bearskin rugs are the sole furnishings of the sleeping chambers used by priests and guests alike, but the heart of the building has been left open as a great hall for assembly and worship. It is lit by a network of rose-red continual light spells cast by the resident clergy.

Here servants of the Morninglord heal the sick or wounded, sponsor those with plans for new businesses and endeavors, help folk to settle in and around town, or aid peddlers and merchants in getting their goods safely to market by organizing regular and well-armed caravans. The Daggerdalesmen recognize just how crucial the success of this temple is to the survival of their community and will fight to the death to avenge any threat to a priest of Lathander's Light.

Sixteen priests, 22 novices, and 15 lay warriors ("Sword Brothers") sworn to Lathander, and three Lathanderian paladins of the Order of the Aster live here



under the guidance of His Radiance, High Mornmaster Harndarr Oryn. Harndarr is a short, squat man who some say has dwarven blood in his lineage. He walks with the aid of a stick, but he has a mellifluous and confident voice that can rise to impressive volume and the wits to use it well. In just a few seasons he has become one of the best-loved and trusted men in Dagger Falls. He is working hard to build a sense of trust and hope in the town and make it again the proud and close-knit community it once was. Much of the pride and hope of the Daggerdalesmen has been put on the shoulders of the near-legendary Randal Morn for years, but Harndarr is trying to bring the hope of peace and healing and renewal to lay alongside Randal's now-victorious struggle.

The temple has little riches beyond food, medicines, and some healing potions. The priests part with the healing drafts only at very stiff prices to raise funds for the town.

Under the temple lie tunnels that have been notorious more than once in the town's past. Though numerous tunnels lie beneath the streets of Dagger Falls, those that lead to the temple have been walled off, and some sort of warning spells have been woven across the work to alert the faithful to any disturbance in their cellars.

The tunnels are said to lead to the dreaded Underdark to caverns that twist along under the riverbank, where smuggling probably continues to this day, and to the crypt of the Mage-Lord of House Morn, the dark sorcerer Colderan. Colderan may or may not lie dead in his tomb, depending on what tales one hears or believes.

### Shops

#### Dulwar Leatherworker

Leather Horse and War Harnesses, Tack, Scabbards, and Clothing



The small, wiry, and lithe merchant Dulwar came to Dagger Falls from southern Daggerdale just over a decade ago. The war harness, scabbards, sheaths, bracers, clothing, and rather crude, but warm and dry, boots Dulwar makes here in his smelly tannery are very popular with the citizenry (and were with the Zhent garrison while it was here, too). Dulwar gets many of the hides he uses through the work of his tanning team, a group of well-armed, strong souls who go out with a wagon into the perils of the Dale to butcher livestock for landowners and buy and bring back the hides.

Dulwar's friendship with Randal Morn has become an increasingly open secret around town since the Zhents left, and he and the priests of Lathander's Light obviously like and respect each other. Dulwar donated his own time and that of his tanning team to hauling supplies when the priests were repairing the temple, and he and the temple's priests have helped each other on many projects since.

Do not expect any stylish stuff here, or even simple adornments or scrollwork. Dulwar makes plain, solid, serviceable gear, and many a weary warrior or local in need has been right glad of that.



### Fulgath's Caravan Supplies

Wagon Wheels, Chests, Tools, Horse Harnesses and Other Caravan Goods

# 8 8

This large, barnlike shop resembles a miniature castle gatehouse. It boasts thick stone roofs with slit windows, heavy twin entry doors (one just inside the other), a night portcullis that crashes down outside the metal-plated outer door, and an always-alert staff who seem to have ready-loaded crossbows at hand wherever they are.

Inside, the always-softly-chuckling and heartily hated rogue Fulgath cheerfully overcharges patrons up to thrice what items sell for elsewhere. "If you want it, that is the price," is a dry phrase he has uttered so often that it has become a bitter local motto. Unfortunately for most purchasers, they almost always sorely need the replacement wagon wheel, chest, tools, harness, or whatever else they come in here seeking, and, as locals often mutter wearily, "Fulgath gets his price."

Recent competition from the Falls market has caused Fulgath to cut down his selection of goods and lower prices just a trifle, but he is always watching for new ways to make coins (in other words, shady or unfair deals to swing with visitors). Fulgath's is still the only place in town that deals in stolen goods, dubious magic, found goods or items scavenged from corpses, and sleeping potions (and even poison some folk whisper). Watch your back when in this shop—and *do not* try to be cleverer than Fulgath. Remember: He always gets his price—one way or another.

#### Thund's Warehouses

Warehouses

# 8 8

These two buildings were the former Zhentarim goods and supplies warehouses and are the two best-built structures in town. They are now owned and operated by Zelos Thund, a large and kindly man of great strength and few words, More than once, he has been seen to lift crates that two horses usually drag around and heft them onto wagons. Local children love to chat with him and watch him whittle little wooden chains or finger boxes with hinged lids-which he promptly gives to them. He is a known friend to Randal Morn and to the Harpers and is thought to have come from his own family hold in the Dagger Hills, which is now occupied by hobgoblins.

Thund operates the warehouses as secure rental storage space for all. The space is available to citizens as well as visitors, and he offers small lockboxes and cubicles as well as larger, bulk cargo storage. He charges from 1 cp per day to 10 gp per day depending on how much space is used. A strongchest or large wagonbed crate costs 1 gp per day, a "day" is counted from highsun to highsun, and one is charged for the full day even if only a portion of it is used. Renters can reach their stored goods at any hour.

Thund guards things in storage with the aid of a band of adventurers at least a dozen strong who are known to command some means of invisibility, a *rope of entanglement*, and magical flight. Certain of their number are half-elven, one, at least, is a lizard man fully as intelligent and articulate as any human, and members of other races that I did not spy may be represented in this company, as well. These nameless,



mysterious hired guards seem to enjoy their work and to be able to guard the warehouses against attacks from the sky above, the sewers below, and from within: Crated monsters bursting forth have twice been slain by these trusty guardians.

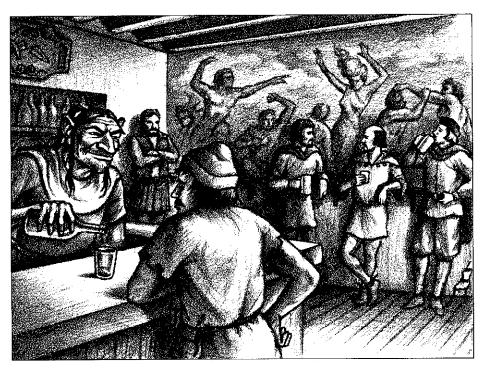
It should be noted that Thund asks all renters if they plan to store anything alive or undead in his houses and strictly forbids such to enter his premises. He also demands to be told of the presence and nature of all magic being stored in the houses. He shares such information only with his hired guards.

Metal-sheathed doors that can be chained in place and barred without and within offer access to each warehouse large enough that loaded wagons can be driven in. At least one wagon is in Thund's care now, its owner vanished and probably

dead. He has not yet disturbed it or confiscated any of the goods in it in payment. The people in town are watching to see how long he will safe-store something for an absent owner before declaring scavenging rights.

## Tav*erns* The Broken Dagger

No longer the brawling orc pit it was during the Zhent occupation, this scarred, stinking drinking hole is still not for the sensitive. The ground floor is a burnt-out shambles. Guests go down some well-worn cellar stairs into a dirt-floored room where a row of beer tuns face an elbows-up bar, which is the only furniture in the place. Guests should look for a lantern and the





signboard depicting the two halves of a broken weapon to show where the stairs are.

In the tavern, the hobgoblins wielding iron bars who used to clear drinkers away from the bar so that new arrivals could order and be served are gone, but patrons still take their drinks away and stand up around the walls to chat. And because of the new management, at least the patrons can now hear each other to converse and not have to constantly watch in all directions for furtive or hurled knives. This new management is a half-ogre, Dynter, and five burly human warriors who are the remnant of the Tesh Tusks, a raiding band grown tired of bloodshed and danger. They have installed a broad, sloped, quite comfortable leaning rail all around the walls to keep the dirty shoulders of patrons off the new mural they are so proud of: a vivid scene of dancing and wrestling (at least, I think they are wrestling) well-oiled, nearly naked humans of both genders that covers all three walls. The bar fills the fourth.

Patrons can also now rent a stool for 1 cp for as long as they want during one evening but are fined 2 sp if they throw the stool or break it. The only seating formerly available was to sit on or against one or more bodies of more unfortunate patrons from the stinking heap in the southwest corner or to "make your own seat" in a fatal fight. A second set of stairs used only for exiting the tavern has also been added. These supplemental stairs cut down on the bloody right-of-way disputes that used to break out almost constantly as the drunken met the thirsty on steps too narrow for easy passage.

The Dagger is still not a place for amenities or genteel relaxation, but if tak-

ing on drink in someplace the rain cannot reach is your only goal, the 1 cp per tankard prices cannot be bettered. Prospectors and adventurers visiting town prefer this place to all others for its prices, swift service, and lack of prying interest about one's doings, name, motives, and occupation.

#### The Red Rock

!! 000

Kessla, a half-elven retired minstrel, ran this ramshackle inn for many years, surviving both Zhent "inspections" and the occasional free-for-all fights that would erupt from time to time. Unfortunately, her luck ran out during the fight to save Dagger Falls and the Red Rock was burned down by a retreating army of orcs. The old inn caught fire and was consumed in just a short time, leaving only a stone foundation.

Randal Morn did not have the funds to rebuild the inn, but the adventurers that helped rescue him donated money to Kessla before leaving Dagger Falls in search of further adventure. It is from this new-found wealth that the current Red Rock has built its business.

The new Red Rock is a stone and wood structure two stories tall that has a down-to-earth atmosphere. Kessla makes sure that the wood is well maintained, and magical globes of light now illuminate the taproom, replacing the candles that illuminated the old Red Rock. By uttering a single word, Kessla can alter the degree of illumination in the room, changing it as her needs and desires dictate.

Kessla is still widely believed to be a Harper agent who reports directly to

<sup>8</sup>Kessla is a NG hef B6.



Storm Silverhand in Shadowdale, if such rumors are to be believed. Regardless of her affiliation, however, Kessla is a beautiful woman who truly has only the best interests of her guests in mind. She is aided in running the inn by her staff: a stable boy named Orthran and two maids named Larstiira and Jandylgrae.

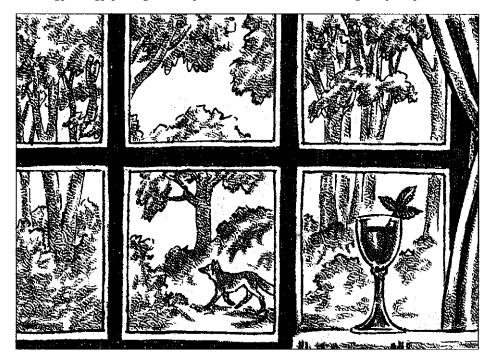
# The Teshford Arms

Since the disappearance of Zhent rule in Dagger Falls, business at the only true inn in town—a pretentious roadhouse on the Tethyamar Trail run by Olavia Tsardruyn,

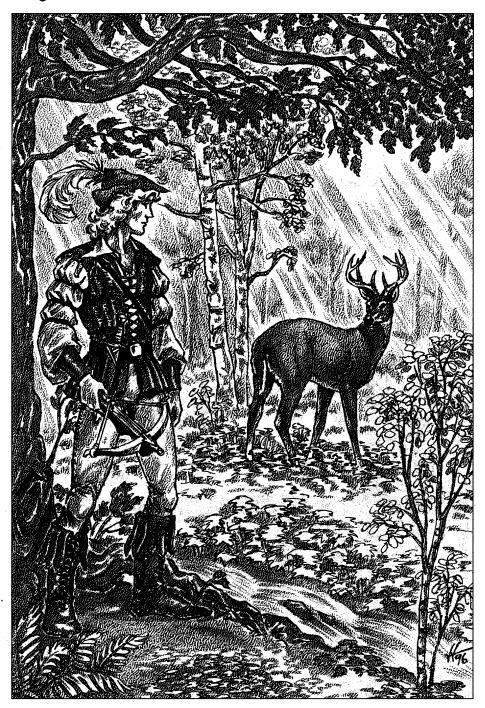
Tethyamar Trail run by Olavia Tsardruyn, whose sole claim to fame is her mint wine—has fallen off. The basic fee for a stay at this cold, unwelcoming place was cut from 2 gp to 1 gp per night in response

since as half of it no longer had to be given to the constable—but business has remained scarce. One peddler of my acquaintance summed up a stay at the Arms as follows: "It's only a little better than camping out under the stars. There's fewer bugs and beasts and more ready water, but the cooking is no better than ye can do for yourself over a fire." With rousing recommendations like this one, it is not all that surprising that the Arms is not full.

Another guest reported to me that the inn is improving. Decent furniture has been added, and baths are now available in the privacy of one's own chambers rather than under the horse pump out back! Olavia has some long-term paying guests (warlike types), and perhaps the steady income they provide her will eventually turn the Arms into a decent road-house—and then again, perhaps not.









# Deepingdale



nown to many as the Dale of Trees, the wooded land that lies around the Glaemril and its tributaries (the Deeping Stream and the Wineflow) is

one of the most beautiful of all the Dales. It is hard not to sigh when one looks about in Deepingdale—in all except the season of snows, anyway. It is difficult to find a view that does not lift the heart, from stomp and stone fences awash with flowers and flitting birds to verdant green fields dappled with ever-present shade.

The trading center of pastoral Deeping-dale—and all some folk ever see of it—is the walled town of Highmoon, which stands on the East Way caravan road where the Wineflow, the southern tributary of the Glaemril, passes very near. In the pleasant streets and shops of Highmoon, the timber, furs, and fresh-killed game (venison, grouse, and pheasant in particular) Deepingdale is famous for are sold, along with Dale produce. Here also the Deepingfolk buy silks, wool, other fabrics, and metal goods.

Deepingdale has been called "a forest garden." Certainly much of it exhibits the fruit of a careful nurturing of the land so as to preserve as many trees and forest life as possible. Hedges and wild gardens grow everywhere to keep game plentiful, and woodcutting and hunting are undertaken with the same care for the land and the renewal of its resources as the planting of the hedges and gardens. Human and elven foresters work together to ensure plentiful game and rich woodland fiddlehead and berry harvests. Owlbears, stirges, and

other harmful predators are slain out of hand (and other predators are carefully harvested appropriate to their numbers), but everything else is left largely alone to grow untrammeled.

This approach has earned the Dale a reputation as the home of tree-loving, backward softheads in neighboring Archendale and in nearby Sembia. However, inhabitants of both those places are not slow to order lumber or furs branded with the distinctive Spreading Tree of Deepingdale. (The Spreading Tree is also depicted on the largest, centermost coin of the three coins used as the badge of the Dale.) Such goods are the finest and most plentiful to be had this side of the Border Forest or the deepest reaches of the Elven Court around perilous and ruined Myth Drannor.

Half of all Deepingfolk are elven or halfelven, for in Deepingdale the Fair Folk and humans have always dwelt in friendly harmony. Deepingdale was founded by Imryll Eluarshee, known as the Deeping Princess, and is named for her. Of the royal blood of Cormanthyr, she married a human and founded the Dale against elven opposition. Outliving her husband by centuries, Imryll looked after many mixed-race families to make sure that no prejudices developed in her growing Dale and also crafted many ioun stones. She is sometimes called the Mother of the Half-Elven in memory of her leadership and guidance. She is buried somewhere in the Dale that bears her name in a crypt whose location has been lost, but which (legend insists) is full of a sparkling cloud of hundreds of ioun stones, whirling endlessly around her coffin.



Deepingfolk who can do so take immense and almost fanatical pride in being able to trace their lineage back to the Deeping Princess or even to one of the children for whom she was an (honorary) aunt. Because of the Deepingfolk's nearholy regard for their founder, folk around the Dragon Reach are learning that to insult the memory of Imryll Eluarshee in the presence of one of the normally quiet, peaceful Deepingfolk is to call up immediate, white-hot rage. Arrogant Arkhenfolk, Sembians, and Zhents alike have died with some overly clever remark about the Laughing Princess on their lips.

# The Countryside

Most of the Deepingfolk are hunters, farmers, and foresters. Here everyone dwells close to the land in a broad, verdant valley where ferns and pools are common. The Deeping Stream and the Wineflow rise and then disappear into sinkholes many times only to reappear nearby and run on for a short space before vanishing again. (This confusing tendency is the reason they appear on so few maps or are mistakenly recorded as the Glaemril, which is often also called the Deeping Stream since that stream flows most directly into it. Properly, only above the intersection with the Wineflow is the Glaemril the Deeping Stream.) The only dubious lands in the nearby region are monster-haunted Arch Wood, to the south, and Glaun Bog, to the east. Militia patrols keep an eye on both, and fully half the Deepingfolk are in the local militia.

Little livestock beyond rabbits and poultry is to be seen on Deeping farms. Instead, farmers busy themselves with crops that climb poles and crowd small fields. On the grassy roofs of dug-in bank houses on the river one can even see rich herb gardens.

So damp a land is much given to mists. "Faerie time" in Deepingdale is when mist lies like a ghostly shroud low over the land. When the fog hangs so, a mounted rider can see over it, but she drops down into its concealing confines if she descends from her saddle.

# The Deepingfolk

The people of Deepingdale are a quiet, peaceful lot. They live in harmony with the land and know what must be done to do so. They spend many energetic days in what city folk in Sembia would scornfully dismiss as "gardening in the dirt."

Most Deepingfolk police their own disputes through discussion and agreed-upon sentences, which range from humiliating public spankings of grown men and women to guilty people being ordered to aid or provide food and goods to their victims. Only serious disputes are taken to the lord of Highmoon, ruler of the Dale. Brigandage and armed violence are automatically serious matters, as are arson and unlawful treecutting. It costs the careless traveler who is after firewood 200 gp for felling a tree in Deepingdale that is not in a designated cutting area. Along the East Way, watch for trees blazed with an axe mark surmounted by the Spreading Tree and cut only between those trees and the road. Away from the East Way, do not cut anything, even along the Glaemrilside trails.

Deepingfolk are athletic, well-trained to arms, and know their land well. Militias muster at least thrice annually and answer a relay of horn calls very quickly from end to end of the Dale. Most Deepingfolk are good archers in even heavy woods and



have experience in fighting foes with sword and spear. Militia folk—male and female, elven, half-elven, and human—all have leather armor and have trained at least somewhat in fighting at night and creeping around in the woodlands as stealthily as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Most Deepingfolk are very good at navigating in thick woods without getting lost; foraging for woodland berries, bark, edible fungi, and the like; and reading spoor and the lie of the land to readily find water, game, and trees of a particular sort. Their knowledge of this woodcraft applies all over the Dales, but it is of lesser effectiveness in the Border Forest, Hullack Forest, and more distant wooded areas.

Deepingfolk tend to be the most tolerant and quietly welcoming of all the Dragon Reach land peoples. They save their wary suspicion and hatreds for goblinkin and the truly evil denizens of other planes who sometimes wander away from Myth Drannor to hunt in the Elven Court woods.

## The Twelve Dancing Wizards

One of the most interesting tales in Deeping lore is that of the Twelve from Thay who tried to seize this verdant land several centuries ago. They attacked without warning, slaying many with their magics,

but were challenged by the Deeping Princess and caught in a *dweomerdance* of her making. This rare and deadly magic enthralls victims into an involuntary dance that strips them of all memories, leaving them feebleminded and giving the caster all of their spell mastery and salient knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Its casting backfires on most wizards, who go insane from the rush of incoming memories.

The Laughing Princess survived the spellcasting, and it was the 12 mages who perished, still dancing. They dance to this day, informed sages say, as invisible, spell-preserved skeletons hidden in a ring of a dozen invisible, extradimensional tomb chambers high above Highmoon and are still adorned with their rings, staves, and other accounterments.

These tombs can only be found by blundering through their invisible doors, which float unseen above the roofs of Highmoon. (Rumor has it that these chambers and their inhabitants are the reason aerial steeds are banned in and around that town.) Use of magic inside a tomb has no effect, since the tomb absorbs all magic to further itself, and physical contact with a dancing skeleton harms living and undead beings alike.<sup>3</sup> Deepingfolk sometimes utter the warning to magic-wielding miscreants: "Keep on like that, and you'll end up like one of the Twelve."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: From what I have seen of thy world, ye might well call Deepingdale a land of Robin Hoods.

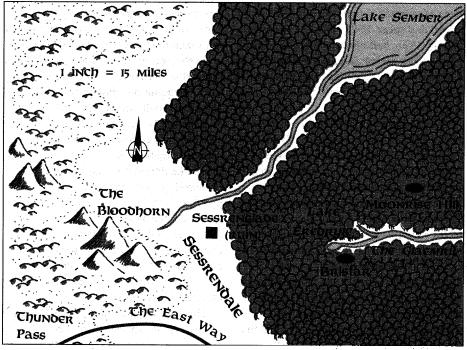
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: One level of experience is drained per round that the victim of this spell is forced to dance. No further details of this disgusting spell are given here; more than enough evil has already been done to those who strive to master sorcery by it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Any touch of a skeleton or something it holds visits the effect of a *chill touch* and an *Otto's irresistible dance* on the toucher, saving throws to avoid these effects are at a -3 penalty.

Some of the Dancing Wizards are known to hold *staves of power*, and at least one has a rod of an unknown type.

Some of the Dancing Wizards are known to hold *staves of power*, and at least one has a rod of an unknown type. All of them wear rings and have wands at their belts. To wrest something away from a skeleton, the attacker must succeed at both an attack roll and a Strength ability check. If the attacker is affected by an *Otto's irresistible dance*, the attacker must also succeed at a saving throw vs. paralyzation every round she or he is so affected to maintain a grip on an item so seized. If this saving throw fails, the grip on the wrested item is lost, and it floats back to its location on the invisible skeleton within two rounds due to some magical side effect. Once removed from a tomb, stolen items escape this tendency to float away.





## Bristar

This elven village is known as Velethuil to its inhabitants and Bristar (a compression from "Brightstar," I am told) to humans. Its moon elves consider themselves part of the Dale and comprise the stalwart archers of Oak Company of the Swords of Deepingdale (the name of the army). Those same deadly arrows defend Bristar against brigands, monsters—and unwanted intrusions.

Travelers should note that non-Deeping humans are neither wanted nor welcomed here. As one grim elf put it to me, "You have the rest of Faerûn to walk about in—leave us this small stretch of woods and *get you gone!*"

That attitude is one good reason not to visit Bristar, and the complete lack of trade

is another. Unless a trader brings a cart of good ash spars for bows or straight yew wands for the making of arrows—which win a grudging welcome—the elves do not want to buy or sell anything. They make potent mint and berry wines and grow enough forest plants to feed themselves and to spare, but they want nothing to do with humans and run people off with arrows if they persist in nosing around.

There *is* good reason to go west of Bristar: the hauntingly beautiful Lake Eredruie, source of the Glaemril (more of a small pool than a lake, actually). Bristar, on the southeastern shore, overlooks its dark, calm waters. The elves believe the lake can heal and that it is sacred to Labelas Enoreth: Elves who bathe in it can gain extra years on Faerûn—once.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: True. Once only, all elves can add 3d20 years to their life span from immersion in the lake. A flask of Lake Eredruie water acts as a potion of healing on elves and half-elves only, but it loses its potency if mixed with any other liquid or substance.



# The Darkwatch

Deep in the forests north of the Glaemril is a region every traveler but the boldest adventurers should avoid—if they can. Those who have seen it and lived to tell the tale say that the Darkwatch<sup>5</sup> is a long deep rift running roughly east to west where black oaks and thorn trees grow thickly, twisted and gnarled into blighted, ugly things.

The elves—and, if they have any wits, all other Deepingfolk—avoid this area. Andelmaus Logging of Highmoon lost an entire cutting crew here: The loggers simply vanished, leaving sledges and tools to be overgrown and swallowed by the forest. Local lore tells of times when weary elves agreed that fire<sup>6</sup> should be used to cleanse the Elven Court of the Darkwatch. When crews set out, however, even veteran elven guides could not find the rift. Other tales tell of times when the trees seemed to shift about, drawing foresters who were trying to stay well away from the Darkwatch into its dark heart.

Shambling mounds, hangman trees, and giant sundews were always to be found around the Darkwatch. Foresters have recently also reported that all manner of monsters are roaming the shunned area of the woods, slaying each other and all other creatures they meet not just for food but for the wanton joy of killing. Rotting carcasses lie about in great numbers, and evil, twisted versions of normally placid or timid woodland creatures have been seen and fought by fearful folk who simply stopped to

glance at what they first thought a peaceful sylvan scene. Whatever evil lurks in the Darkwatch is on the rise, and the tainted area of the forest is spreading.

Old tales in Deepingdale whisper that the elves of Cormanthyr imprisoned a great evil in the rift even before the Mythal was raised in Myth Drannor—an evil that is slowly awakening as passing centuries weaken the bindings upon it. Your humble<sup>7</sup> servant was so bold as to question Rhauntides of Highmoon, Sage of Deepingdale, about the nature of what lies in the Darkwatch. His sage counsel follows.

Exactly what is now on the move in the Darkwatch is not certain, but the rift does connect with the Underdark. The rot and decay bound into it so long ago were a greater part of the powers of Moander, hurled by that dark god as a weapon against a fair elven city - and so made vulnerable to its inhabitants influence in return. The city of Tsornyl was blighted and corrupted beyond redemption and many of its inhabitants twisted into dark, monstrous races. (Deepspawn are said to be one of these.) However, the creeping evil Moander threw off to do this deed was severed from the god forever by a divine mighty countermagic that cost many bright elves their lives-and the lessened, tortured god was thus able to be cast out of Faerûn—or so the tale goes.

The bound divine evil could not be expunged, but only imprisoned. It has gnawed at its spell bonds down through the ages until it is now breaking free at last. Its powers are to rot, corrupt, and mutate; it causes life to change in form and nature to bloodlust-governed evil if its vitality is

<sup>6</sup>Elves agreeing to use fire on trees in a wood shows the wise how dire this place is.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>The location of the Darkwatch is shown on first map in the section on Highmoon later in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster: Humble? Hah! Volo's definition of humility obviously differs from the one that the rest of us are using, even on more than one world!





too strong to be slain by rotting. Thus this creeping evil spawns hitherto-unknown creatures of destruction.

The weakening of the spell bonds is in part due to age and in another part caused by the decline of the Fair Folk—but it should not have rightfully befallen for an age or more yet. It is Rhauntides' suspicion that the freeing of evil has been hastened by a force working from below—perhaps the phaerimm or the draw—and a force of the surface world. Rhauntides speculates that the surface forces are probably servants of Cyric, acting under the Mad God's orders, for "the new god is ever unsubtle, overly hasty, and imperfect in his understanding of what he wields and what he tries to work upon."

The Sage of Deepingdale forewarns that what is stirring in the Darkwatch now may be the next great evil that heroes, adventurers, priests, and archmages of Faerûn alike must all strive against in times to come lest the Realms be swept away. Yet humans are always slow to see coming danger and slower still to realize that they must do something about it and not leave the work to the next person, who has probably already left it for them.

Rhauntides advises all travelers to stay out of the Deepingdale woods unless invited there by Deepingfolk for a good reason, but he also reports that adventuring bands have reached the rift and even fought evil monsters in the crumbling towers and chambers of Tsornyl itself and escaped to tell the tale. He added a cautionary note to all who have brought riches out of that ruin: Have such things cleansed by the most powerful and holy magic available, for the creeping rot of Moander lurks in all it touches, corrupting folk to madness if it cannot destroy them with disease.



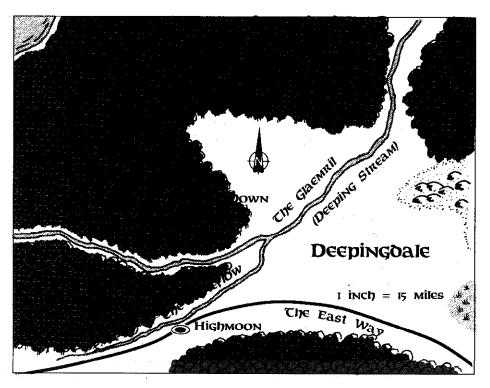
## Highmoon

The town of Highmoon is the only settlement of any size in Deepingdale, and it is growing fast. Easygoing friendliness and tolerance is the daily tone of Highmoon. Most travelers who find trouble here go looking for it—or make their own. Travelers on the East Way find Highmoon a pleasant stop, and if they require mercenary guards or provisioning before or after a trip through Thunder Pass, Highmoon's supplies may well prove vital.

Highmoon's name comes from Highmoon Hill, the nearly forgotten name of the ridge on which the Tower of the Rising Moon was built by the half-elven hero Aglauntaras in the Year of the Wandering Wyvern (1022 DR). Always important as a

stronghold from which Thunder Pass and the nearby ford of the Glaemril could be controlled, the Tower attracted settlers to the safety of its shadow, particularly after the militant Alantar and Soryn elven families took up arms against all Fair Folk who were content to dwell in peace with humans. The Deeping Princess took over the Tower upon the death of Aglauntaras, ruling as coregent of Deepingdale with his daughter Alanshara.

From that day to this, elves, half-elves, and humans have dwelt together around Highmoon Hill in a community of trees, winding lanes, small cottages, and splendid gardens. Such features are today being pushed to the lands around the town as the walls of Highmoon have been completed and buildings have





begun to appear that rise three floors above the street. Already some of Highmoon's inhabitants talk of expanding the wails-and visitors are warned that this topic is one that arouses strong feelings. It is best to keep silent and voice no opinion if one is asked about it. Though monster raids from the mountains and forays by Lashan's troops have both come within sight of the Tower, no army has assaulted Highmoon in centuries, so the protection of the walls may be more symbolic than vitally necessary. However, many folk in Deepingdale believe that their completion is the only thing that has kept Archendale from raising arms to annex its rich neighbor. Arkhenfolk, it should be noted, receive a rather cool reception in Deepingdale.

Farms still nestle in closely around the walls of Highmoon, and visitors can still see more trees and flowers within its walls than in any other town in the Dales. Cobbles are being laid in the streets for the first time, covering the last mud and corduroy (log-paved) stretches. Well over a thousand folk dwell here, plus the Swords of Deepingdale (Oak Company and Spear Company, both fielding 70 mounted elven archers), the 30-strong Tower Guard, and as many folk of the Tower household.

# Places of Interest in Highmoon Unique Sites

## Caravan Campground

Formerly a camp for hired workers constructing the town walls, this muddy chaos of buildings is now the center of an ongoing horse market and caravan camping area. It has all the untidiness so happily missing from the High Market, but it

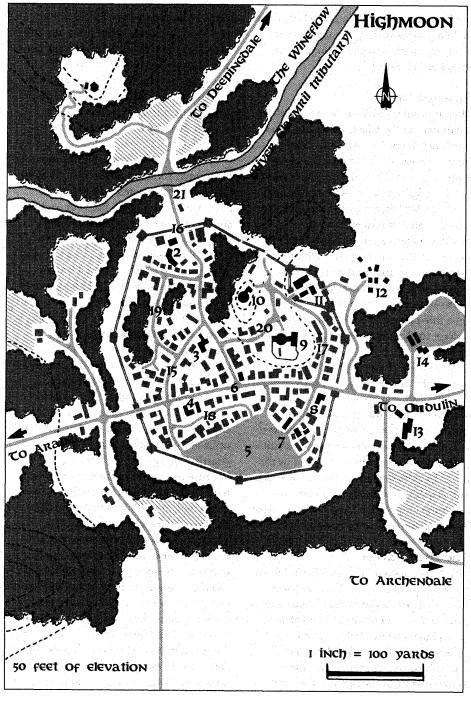
## Highmoon Map Key

- **1.** Rhauntides's Tower (mage's residence)
- 2. The Rising Moon (inn)
- Silverhand House {manor house, merchant coster headquarters, and mercenary training grounds)
- **4.** Royal High House (caravan goods shop)
- 5. The High Market
- **6.** The Oak and Spear (tavern)
- 7. Andelmaus Logging (offices of Andelmaus and timber shop)
- **8.** Hanseld's Emporium (spice, curio, and furniture shop)
- **9.** Leaves of Learning (temple to Oghma)
- **10.** The Tower of the Rising Moon (lord's residence and stronghold)
- 11. The Lord's Barracks
- 12. Caravan campground
- 13. The Silver Shield (inn)
- **14.** Darian Stables (tack and harness shop, horse trainer, breeder, and seller)
- 15. Bunstable Street
- **16.** The Deeping Run (street)
- 17. Stallion Lane
- 18. Acorn Lane
- 19. Torlar's Street
- **20.** White Arrow Way
- **21.** Glaemril Ford (ford of the Wineflow, tributary of the Glaemril)

also boasts frequent and heavy watch patrols to keep things far quieter and more law-abiding than in most such caravan grounds.

This campground is where to go to see caged monsters from far lands, jugglers, contortionists, and freaks of nature (usually these last are subtly shapechanging dopplegangers or simply races normally unknown in the Dales region). This area is where the shadier business deals in Deep-







ingdale are made. This is also where most ordinary hireswords pitch their tents, awaiting a patron to pay them to guard things or kill things.

#### Glaemril Ford

This unremarkable ford of the Wineflow, a tributary of the Glaemril, located just north of the town walls is mentioned here because of a strange magical power it possesses that is said to be the blessing of the Laughing Princess: From time to time, random folk crossing the ford are cured of all diseases and hurts-and a random wizard spell comes into their minds for them to cast later without incantation or material components! This usually befalls nonwizards, and some of them are momentarily beset by yet a third property of the ford: They levitate straight up into the air for a few breaths!

Several priests and mages, including the nearby Rhauntides, have investigated the ford, but they have found no cause or source for these odd but consistent occurrences. Some folk of the Dale even talk of forming a club—or worse, a cult—of people who have been "blessed by the ford." Despite queries put to various sages and Danali's Index (see the Leaves of Learning entry below), the origin of these manifestations remains mysterious.

#### The High Market

This large, open market is different from most others of its kind in that vendors have the use of a public bathhouse and privy at the east end of the market and that a huge variety of herbs and herbal concoctions (from flavored drinks to medicines) are offered for sale here.

Merchants from Cormyr are the most

frequent shoppers here in all but the coldest months; many fast caravans bring the wares of Marsember and Suzail here in exchange for good furs and herbs. Tressym, the winged cats found thick as thieves in Eveningstar, are very popular with the Deepingfolk, and many are brought here by Cormyrean traders and the folk of Deepingdale also seem to have a taste for the sharper cheeses made in Cormyr. Sembian merchants compete for Deepingdale coins with elaborate games and blown glass items brought by ship from hotter lands, and minstrels often play in the market for the coins tossed their way. All in all, this market is a great place to browse - and it is even carefully planted with hard mosses so as to be less muddy than most.

#### The Lord's Barracks

This walled compound of armory and barracks buildings has its own gate in the town walls opening directly into the caravan campground so that army forces can charge into that ever-changing tent city in an instant if need be. The gates and walls of this compound are alertly guarded all day and night through because more fine weapons are stored here than in all the other Dales combined. (Swordpoint in Archendale can boast more arms, but not better arms.) The town watchmen, who patrol the streets and market, operate out of the barracks and the Swords are based here, though at any given time half of them are out in the Dale on patrol. Visitors are not encouraged to nose about here, but the admirer of fine horseflesh is in for a treat when a mounted East Way road patrol sallies forth: Many Swords soldiers like to coax their horses to rear up and dance,



flinging their hooves out in fighting strikes, as they emerge through the gates!

#### Silverhand House

This imposing stone manor is the headquarters of the Silverhand House coster founded by the retired elven adventurer Gaelin Silverhand 60-odd years ago (no relation to the Seven Sisters of that name). The tail, proud elves and half-elves of this organization run swift, well-guarded caravans east to Ordulin and west to Arabel from here, taking rare woods, resin, amber, and the finest beaver and marten pelts to long-standing buyers in those places.

Here the Silverhand House coster recruits mercenaries its members have seen and liked in action to begin the long and rigorous moral testing and training process that ends in discharge, full staff status, or actual partnership in the House. Here is also where its members buy good specimens of the wares they deal in from passersby, such as adventurers who have ventured deep into the Elven Court woods beyond Lake Sember.

This coster pays well and is open and fair in its dealings. If one in turn deals honestly with its members, they try to maintain an ongoing, lifetime trading relationship. This forthright, loyal behavior makes the coster members very bad to have as enemies and wonderful as allies; Silverhand House maintains a loosely affiliated adventuring company it uses to take covert action to avenge itself on any who cheat its members. Around the Dragon Reach Silverhand House has won a reputation for reliability second to none. "Stay small and stay good" is Gaelin's motto, and his coster follows it.

### Residences Rhauntides' Tower

This small, 60-foot-tall hexagonal stone tower is ornately carved with swirling meteors and random stars. It and its accompanying stable barn overlook Highmoon from atop the Hill of Spells, where its builder, Rhauntides, has a small horse farm.

Rhauntides lives quietly, seldom leaving his tower. Known as the Sage of Deepingdale, he is a kindly, quiet man who tries to answer any lore questions for the folk of Deepingdale for a nominal fee of 2 gp per query. Visitors find his expertise much more pricey. For them he typically charges 50 gp and more for simple queries, quickly escalating to 200 gp and up for any questions that concern magic.

Rhauntides buys spellbooks if they contain spells new to him that he deems of value (be warned that such magics have grown few down through the years), but he does not train strangers in magic, cast spells for them, or go adventuring-no matter what titanic piles of coins and gems are offered! The reader is further warned that this former adventurer has destroyed no less (and probably morel than 16 wizards and adventuring bands that have come to his tower to try to steal or seize magic from him, including one Zulkir of Thay, an alhoon (mind flayer lich), a dragon, and an eye tyrant who attacked behind a shield of three undead servitor beholders! (Such attacks have lessened somewhat since Shaunil Tharm, Rhauntides' lady and sole pupil, has let it be known that the Sage of Deepingdale can instantly call on Elminster of Shadowdale for aid if the need arises.)



### The Tower of the Rising Moon

This black-walled stronghold actually boasts three towers, each topped with a double-ended or "horned" snow awning that scoops cooling breezes down into the interior when the trapdoors are open in summer. Inside, it is a miracle of hanging plants, magical radiances, and cleverly piped water. I have never been in a castle that seemed so much like a cave in the middle of a garden and not a dank, dark fortress.

The Tower of the Rising Moon is the abode of the lord of Highmoon, a half-elven warrior named Theremen Ulath who is thankfully easygoing and informal. At the Tower, visitors of note are entertained or even housed. Even if you are not likely to require housing or entertaining, ask to see the central Starfall Chamber, where a magnificent and thoroughly detailed map of the Dales has been carved into the top of a huge circular table. At night, starlight is projected down onto the table by means of slanted mirrors, and the effect is awesomely beautiful!

The kitchens here turn out superb food—subtle sauces are the key—and the wood-paneled rooms are as grand as any to be found in the retreats of rich Sembians or Cormyrean nobles' castles. The place is a fortress, though, and every guest has an escort and every room its standing guard of vigilant Tower guards.

Captains of the Guard serve as judges in the absence of the lord, though they do not put anyone to death without calling in Rhauntides, any visiting Harpers or war wizards of Cormyr, or the captains of the Swords first to consult. Miscreants usually find themselves in the dungeons, awaiting a full and formal trial. The trial is preceded by a magical mind-reading by Rhauntides to learn the truth. Only the guilty or those unable to be effectively read go to trial. Those proven innocent by Rhauntides's magic are apologized to, rewarded for their troubles with gifts from the Dale, and become honored guests lodged in the best rooms in the Tower rather than occupants of its dungeons.

Popular legend around Deepingdale asserts<sup>8</sup> that the unused lowest level of dungeons in the heart of Highmoon Hill is roamed by will-o'-wisps and features deep wells and powerful magic (both spellbooks and items of power) walled away since the days of Princess Imryll. These items are supposedly hidden behind sliding stone panels that open only to those who can find them and who sing the right song of opening. Both words and tune must be correct, but key and performance can vary. It is my pleasure to set forth here for the first time the words to one such charm-though I know not to which door nor tune these words are linked:

In the lands under the wave, Where the merfolk daily save Sailors who have gone astray, Sounds a bell for me today. Sing away, come away – Yea, sing away, come away, And open now for me I pray.

## Temples

It is rumored that a temple to Corellon Larethian stands in the woods near

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Elminster: Correctly.



Highmoon, but I was unable to find it or find anyone willing to guide me to it or even confirm its existence. I suspect it does exist and lies northwest of town beyond the Hill of Spells, but I stress that this is conjecture. Such places of worship are usually breathtakingly beautiful forest glades watched over by elven guardians, so bear this in mind should you walk the many hundreds of winding forest trails in this direction. Though a series of small road shrines dot the East Way west of the Dale and a rentable shrine of all faiths (sacred to none) exists in the caravan campgrounds, the only official temple in Highmoon and the only place of worship within its walls is the splendid temple to Oghma, the Leaves of Learning.

#### Leaves of Learning

The slim-spired temple of Oghma the Binder, the largest and most impressive structure in Highmoon, stands at one end of Highmoon Hill above its walled, forested garden, where cascades of endlessly pumped water babble past many small bowers and contemplation nooks. One of the finest libraries east of Candlekeep resides in stout stone chambers inside, hushed under the weight of many interwoven antifire spells that do not let even *fireball* spells ignite, let alone torches or sparks!

Wisely, the clergy members here have let it be widely known that they have not a word about magic within their walls; they leave ail that to Rhauntides. This policy has probably saved them from many thefts over the years and allowed the temple to concentrate on its two major aims: collecting new written records of life in the region and copying

out books and tracts for those who desire them and can afford to pay for their scribing. The written life records include diaries, war histories, and even campfire accounts from everywhere in the Dragon Reach. Priests are kept busy from day to day reading and buying books brought to the temple and going out to ask old folk specific questions and take down the answers. Only seven priests labor at both the record collecting and the copying, protected by a Tower Guard detachment. Although many of them are viewed as dotty old creatures by Deepingfolk-they are apt to be absent-minded, mumbling, hunched, and bespectacled-they are dearly loved. The town is very proud of the reputation for sophistication that these priests' work has given Highmoon.

In just a decade or so, Highmoon has gone from being unknown or viewed as a deliberately backward bumpkin town to being a growing, bustling center of culture because of the mage Rhauntides and because of Learned Father Higher Atlar Hasicor Danali, the tall, grave high priest of Oghma who runs this temple. His severe, balding head and flapping black Robes of Many Sigils are seen only seldom in the streets, because he spends most of his time deep in the temple's innermost chambers working on his dream: the Index.

No one would ever accuse Danali of being dotty or forgetful, but his early clerical life assisting a librarian whose wits were failing drove home to him just how much finding things in any library rode on the possibly addled wits and all-too-mortal heart of whoever shelved and read its contents. If precise and detailed knowledge of where to



find specific things was ever to outlive people, an ever-growing written record of where to find things must be compiled. In response to this concern, Danali has been creating his Index to the contents of the library of the temple for some 40 years. (He is 56.) Oghma so approved of this quiet back-room work that the Binder appeared in visions to high members of the church of Oghma's hierarchy repeatedly to order the priests to elevate Danali over the years and ultimately to select him as leader of the Leaves of Learning. There is no question of any trickery or misinterpretation about these visions, and news of them has spread through the priesthood of Oghma throughout Faerûn like wildfire and resulted in many delegations from other temples (including much older and larger ones) to see Danali's work.

The key to Danali's Index is to have a separate sheet of vellum for each entry so. that alphabetical order need never be lost. Each tome in the library's collection is then numbered so that they can be positively identified in the Index, and detailed notations are made upon its subject matter and internal topics of interest or details of note with the books collection number given at the end of an entry. For example: "Barrels, making of, using cherry wood: Askran of Selgaunt, brief descrip. set down in 1320 DR; see Sembian Days and Ways (#10351)."

Books in the library can be examined by outsiders upon payment of a fee of 15 gp per tome. Examination can last up to a full day; longer requires another payment of the fee. The book must be studied in the room where it is shelved and two lay clergy members always supervise such perusals. Reading and even discussion of a work are allowed, but not its copying. Priests can make copies of selected pages on a successive day for a fee of 5 gp per page or 10 gp if a page contains maps, diagrams, symbols, or illustrations that the patron wishes to have reproduced exactly. Prices for copying lengthy tracts or entire works are negotiable.

## Shops

**Andelmaus Logging** *Timber and Cut Wood* 

8 8

In this aromatic shop on the edge of the market, Andelmaus Logging sells odd-sized cuts of wood and special orders and buys timber from anyone who brings it in. This company specializes in supplying fine and rare woods to the cities of Sembia, and to get huge shadowtop spars or wagonloads of duskwood it has more than once cut more trees in the Dale than the foresters allow. (The owner paid the fines and charged them to her customers as "special fees.")

The owner—a purring, catlike, totally unscrupulous coin-clutcher named Kessia, who is obviously at home in the most cutthroat Sembian merchant circles, is unrepentant but does not want to get run out of town. She buys timber here without asking questions as to its origin and runs heavily armed woodcutting wagon trains into former Sessrendale to cut trees along the western edge of the Elven Court woods. These teams cut down everything and trample what is left, and they take a lot, pushing the forest back year by year.

Consequently, the local elves do not like Kessia at all. Her guards and her



purchased magical items keep her personally safe, but the elves made sure that Arkhen woodcutters were alerted when she tried to sneak a cutting team into the Arch Wood. Not a hireling, adz, ox, or wagon of that team ever returned to Highmoon.

Kessia is currently rumored to be hiring adventurers to explore for new places to cut wood. Locals hint darkly that what she is after is a private strike force so that she can arrange "accidents" to befall elves that stand in her way (physically or metaphorically) in the woods and other foes who decry her business practices.

#### Darian Stables

Tack and Harness, Horsebreeder, Trainer, and Seller



An always-calm, patient former warrior from far Impiltur, Alamus Darian breeds, trains, and sells horses here and at a much larger ranch well down the Glaemril. He is considered an expert trainer and a fair judge of diseases and injuries, but he never buys horses. He sells tack and harness, trained riding mounts, and draft animals for average prices. He charges 1 sp per horse examined for consultations about equine health, but he does not travel to look at any beast further away than as far along the East Way as one can get while still keeping the Tower of the Rising Moon in sight. He gave me the impression he ran away from something in Impiltur, but he will not talk about his past at all; however, he is a good fellow who definitely knows his horses.

#### Hanseld's Emporium

Spices, Exotic Goods, Curios, and Furniture



The whimsical half-elf who runs this shop is apt to be seen dancing along the roof ridge or playing a longhorn<sup>9</sup> atop a pile of crates out back when a more, er, normal shopkeeper would be inside selling things - or at least watching to see that patrons do not just help themselves. But Hanseld is, well, Hanseld, and people, especially children, love him just the way he is-the local source of free entertainment. Hanseld can outplay or outsing a minstrel when he is of a mind to, but he is usually too busy closeted in a back room seeing to the personal needs of clients who have traveled a long way to reach his shop.

Most folk think that people come to the shop from so far because Hanseld's Emporium is the only place they can get the rare and exotic spices and curios from Impiltur, Chessenta, the Tashalar, and Calimshan that he sells—to say nothing of the finely crafted lamps, tables, and lounges from Marsember and Selgaunt. But in truth all of those things can be had in Suzail, Westgate, and Sembia, and a lot of those clients he spends time behind closed doors with come *from* those very same well-supplied places.

Your diligent servant made some covert inquiries and can now reveal to all what was only suspected before: Likable, humorous Hanseld is an expert smuggler and fence of stolen goods, with shady shipping contacts all over Sembia and in Marsember, too! If your business interests require your acquaintance with a smug-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Elminster: Flute to ye.



gler or a fence or if your tastes in furniture run to, say, life-sized bronze mermaid statues with moving chests and lips who gasp out incense smoke or tables made from the coiled, severed tails of giant jungle lizards, then by all means pay Hanseld a call. He is a brilliant—longhorn player.

#### Royal High House

Caravan Goods

1 1 1 1

This pair of crammed, barnlike shops on the East Way are together known as Royal High House, the home of Royal Provisioners of Highmoon. The "Royal" in the place's name comes from the fact that the Deeping Princess started this business as a service to the humans she was enticing to her new settlement. Today, these shops cater to the caravan trade. They sell tack, tents, tarpaulins, tools, harness, and even new, ready-to-roll wagons! They claim the finest and most varied selection of traveling rations anywhere-and as far as my mouth could tell, 10 it seems they have called upon the herb gardeners of the Dale to season their dried food so that it just might be the finest anywhere!

Wineskins—items rarely plentiful enough in any outfitting shop—are to be had in profusion here, as are ready-dried kindling, horse liniment, slow candles, and a host of other usually unobtainable things. If something is necessary for camping, it is to be found here somewhere. The Royal High House's on-thestreet convenience costs you about 10% more than the average prices—but if you are in a hurry, it is more than worth it.

#### Tavern

The Oak and Spear



The signboard of this inn shows a spear buried in the trunk of an old oak. The shaft of the spear passes through both an orc skull and a harp. The skull recalls a great local victory over an orc horde that poured through the Thunder Pass almost 200 winters ago, and the harp symbolizes good cheer, which is what this dimly lit, cozy drinking spot is widely known for now.

A mug of draft beer costs 8 cp or a good song; most minstrels and bards who pass through town make a point of stopping here. If you want quiet seclusion for your drinking, come during the day when harpists play gentle, washing-the-strings background music. The rest of the time this place is apt to be cheerfully noisy because each entertainer always tries to outdo the others.

A full range of ales, lagers and stouts can be had here as well as zzar, a few sherries, a brandy, and some wines, but most patrons do not bother. The draft brewed on the premises, Highmoon Dark, is justly famous across the Dragon Reach. It is a dark, smoky beer with a rich, nutty, almost baconlike aftertaste. The Oak and Spear is the only place one can get it, so patrons drink it in copious quantities.

#### INN

Since the rise to prominence of Shandril Shessair, the lady wielder of spellfire, the Rising Moon has become Deepingdale's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Elminster: Some people's taste is only in their mouths.





most famous inn and deservedly receives its own separate entry in this guidebook. This leaves me here to describe only:

# The Silver Shield

The mirror-bright hanging shield of this wayhouse is the first thing travelers approaching Highmoon from the east see. It heralds a house of quality — pretentious quality, I fear. The Starnar elven family, who run this inn, mean well. They go for spotless cleanliness and. expensive furnishings that scream luxury and money. However, the service is so haughty and slow and the rooms so cold that the disappointing final effect is one of being unwelcome, (The stiffness of the staff members seems to vanish, by the

way, when they are dealing with elven guests.)

The 13 sp per night per head fee does not help, either, when everything – from a tallglass of chilled mintwater to stabling – is extra. A careless traveler can easily run up a bill of 15 gp or so for an overnight stay with a bath, evenfeast meal, drinks, and the like.

Still, for snobs or folk with so much money that they want to be rid of its irksome weight, this is surely the cleanest and most exclusive lodging in town. The careful traveler who dines, drinks, and stables a mount elsewhere than the Silver Shield will enjoy a stay of average cost at an inn that is a very clean and pleasant but otherwise average — and pretends to be much, much more.



## The Rising Moon

Inn

?? BBBB

This popular inn is cheap, warm, and cozy. It feels like guests are being made welcome in someone's home by casual hosts who do not care if people put their feet up on the tables, so long as they enjoy being there and do not pick fights with other guests.

#### The Place

The half-timbered inn has a fieldstone ground floor and chimney and a roof of cedar shakes. A post out front, the wall above the serving window of the bar (where the proprietor's axe hangs), and the stained glass of the inn's front door all display the sign of the inn: the silver crescent moon. The upper floor has 11 sleeping rooms that vary widely in size. One room can accommodate a party of six in separate beds. For larger parties, renting more than one room is the norm, although the inn does have an attic where the staff members sleep.

The trot down to Deeping Stream that Shandril Shessair used to make is blocked by a city wall now. Traffic through the gate usually makes a water bucket run, even with a shoulder yoke, impractical, so piping has been run up from the river. A treadle pump installed in a small summerhouse just behind the kitchen door moves the water up through the pipes. For 1 cp per bucket, passersby are allowed the use of the pump to fill their own buckets.

The cellars beneath the Rising Moon are extensive. The owner, Gorstag, is thinking

of relocating the staff sleeping quarters into them and putting another floor of rooms in by opening up the attic with dormers.

### The Prospect

Gorstag's thoughts of expansion are due to the Moon's burgeoning popularity. Always the best no-troubles lodging in Highmoon, this inn has become famous as the early home of the only known wielder of spellfire in all the Realms, Shandril Shessair. Many folk, from powerful wizards seeking the secrets of spellfire to the merely curious, have come to Highmoon to question Gorstag closely about Shandril's life in hopes of learning just what awakened spellfire within her.

Gorstag retired from adventuring to reopen his father's old inn here some 30 years ago. To protect the gruff old warrior and his wife, Lureene, Harpers have taken to staying at the Moon when they are in town. And though he knows it not, the cook Gorstag hired to replace the treacherous Korvan—a fat, mute halfelven lady named Rhiia Duskmantle—is a Harper agent.

Success has not spoiled the folk of the Moon. They are still the same friendly, easygoing, cheerfully earthy hosts they have always been. Staying at the Moon is like temporarily being taken in to a large, fun-loving, forgiving family. This feeling of belonging is one of the reasons crowding is now a regular problem at the Moon—and the others are Lureene's butter tarts and Rhiia's hearty poultry dishes. (Ah! Lureene has the gift of the gods in cooking, but not even my silver tongue could charm the butter tart recipe out of her!<sup>11</sup>)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Elminster: Not for lack of trying, Volo me lad. Next time, take thy tongue out of her ear and Gorstag will not have to threaten ye with his axe!





Gorstag and Lureene of the Rising Moon

Some local folk come to the Moon for dinner, and when the place is full to bursting, others ask if they can sleep in the stables just to feel they have stayed at the Moon! Gorstag always tries to accommodate them, but if it is a quiet visit to a private, nearly deserted inn you are after, come here only in the howling heart of winter. In the cold season, a visitors still find the main room crowded at mealtimes, but the rest of the day guests are few. It is also in winter that Gorstag taps his excellent and very strong cider and serves it hot by the fire with buttered biscuits!

### The Provender

Though Lureene's tarts easily take the prize for the best wands to be had at the Moon, Rhiia's soups, pork pies, and fowl dishes are what fill most folk up and keep

them coming back for more. On the next page is the fowl recipe that has helped to make the Moon famous—or rather, two recipes, the one being a variant of the other. The name of the first recipe, I am told, comes from its origins: It hails from a back-country Harper adventuress dwelling near what is now Everlund.

#### The Prices

Folk who come here just for meals pay 1 gp for all they can eat and drink on the premises (carrying away is not allowed) or 5 sp for all they can eat and drinks costing extra. Guests pay 6 sp a night for a bed, but a whopping 4 gp if they want a room all to themselves due to the inn's normal crowding. Guests receive their meals at a reduced price of 2 sp per person per meal for as many servings as they can down,



## Old Tower Fowl



Divers pieces of chicken or turkey meat from birds that have been plucked, their innards turned out, and heads and feet removed — enough to fill a greatpot

1 handful of ground black pepper

2 handfuls of salt

3 handfuls truffles or black wrinkle Dale mushrooms

1 pint dry cider

1 pour thickest cream

Melt a little over half the butter in the greatpot over a goodly fire, then add the pieces of fowl and fry them gently until golden all over. Sprinkle them with salt and pepper to taste and then cover them and cook them over light flames whilst ye take a frying pan with a lid and melt the rest of the butter in it over goodly flames. Scorch not the butter!

To this melted butter add the mushrooms and stir gently until their juices run out into the butter. Then pour off all the butter and mushroom juices into the greatpot, taking the pan of cooked 'shrooms away from the heat.

but drinks are extra. Stabling is an extra 1 sp per night per beast.

All folk paying for drinks—that is, all overnight guests and those visiting just to

Pour now the cider into the greatpot and add more salt and pepper to taste, then cover and simmer over gentle flames for a goodly while. Run ye a longfork into the fowl from tyme to tyme to see when it be done through.

When 'tis cooked, take the fowl from the flames and fork out the pieces into a pile atop the mushrooms. Let the mixture stand whilst ye stir the cream into the greatpot. Return it to gentle flames and simmer until thick, stirring constantly!

When the savce is thick, lift it from the flames just long enough to put the fowl and shrooms back into the greatpot. Simmer and stir until the fowl and mushroom mixture is reheated, tasting and seasoning with more salt and pepper if desired.

When the taste is right, serve immediately. Remainders can readily be added to clear soups to hearten them up.

#### Ladies' fowl

This recipe is made the same way as Old Tower fowl save that one fries six small peeled field onions in the greatpot with the butter until they are browned, then ladies them out, leaving all juices behind. When the fowl is fried golden, add the onions back along with two crushed and peeled cloves of garlic and any stock from earlier cooking of fowl that one may have. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then cook as with Old Tower fowl whilst ye chop chicken livers and parsley fyne and seed and skin two fists of ripe green grapes.

When done, add all these to the greatpot and boil hard until thickened. Taste, add salt and pepper if desired, then pour into a warmed serving dish and take to table.

dine, who elect to pay just for all they can eat—face prices of 4 cp per talltankard for beer and 3 cp per tallglass for wine.

Gorstag serves Shadowdark Ale, Purple



Dragon Ale, and Dragon's Breath Beer, and stocks a dubious selection of rather plummy red wines and dry, thin whites made locally by old ladies along the Glaemril who cannot resist experimentally adding herbs and berries to each vintage. The quality of their wine varies wildly from bottle to bottle, and I would not recommend it for anyone not willing to lose the worth of their coin in the taste experiment.

Gorstag himself loves night snacks. While he is up preparing things, he feels he might as well serve other night eaters who come to the front door and blow through a tube to make a distinctive low humming sound that does not wake guests above but brings Gorstag to open up. These snacks consist of beer, hot buttered bread, and cheese. Strong cheeses are Gorstag's passion; he offers Arabellan Cheddar, Elturian Gray, Pepper Cheeseand even Damarite Red and the rarely seen Green Calishite!<sup>12</sup> A mug and a platter sets snackers back the grand sum of 1 cp and is the best deal by far in town if one can wait until the wee hours to dine! I've seen hungry adventurers come in and devour a dozen such servings, one after another.

#### Travelers' Lore

The Rising Moon is an old, historied inn. Gorstag can tell many tales of the early days of Highmoon and of his own adventuring career. Despite what he says, however, he is *not* old enough to ever have known the Deeping Princess.

Most folk think of the Moon just as the home of spellfire. Those expecting fireworks, strange magic, or even a commemorative plaque will be disappointed. Gorstag and Lureene are, however, very proud of "their little girl" Shandril and will talk freely of her early days at the inn.

Gorstag understands the restlessness that drove Shandril to seek adventure, but believes he did the right thing in giving her a normal childhood and keeping her hidden from prying eyes for so long. He and Lureene studiously avoid answering questions as to Shandril's present whereabouts, Instead, they talk to the pryingly curious about the exciting growth of Highmoon and what it will mean to the treasured pastoral feel of the Dale and the sylvan-loving elves.

One of the rumored locations of the tomb of the Deeping Princess is beneath the cellars of the Rising Moon. Although Gorstag denies that there is any truth to the rumor, a secret shaft was recently discovered in one side of the hearth chimney opening out of its side into the kitchens. The shaft proved to descend past the present cellars into a low, arch-roofed cellar about 70 feet long whose far end was blocked by a rock fall. Gorstag believes this was more likely a smugglers' cellar than an elven tomb, and its construction would seem to support his contention. It is rumored in town that a certain patron has paid Gorstag a very handsome sum of money for the private and exclusive use of this storage space. Just who the renter is and what the cellar is being used for are things Gorstag refuses to discuss; even the most avid gossips do not seem to know.

History buffs should not miss the battered Stag Shield above the kitchen door. Its barely legible arms are those of Rauthren Halawk, one of the first human settlers to answer the call of the Deeping Princess to dwell here by the Glaemril and found Deepingdale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>The interested diner can find out more about all of these cheeses—and beers—in Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue.



# Hunters' Down

Named for a long-ago battle in which human hunters died in a last stand atop the hill against a bugbear host, the long, tree-girt hill of Hunter's Down<sup>13</sup> is a landmark used by many to navigate the winding forest lanes north of the Glaemril and by Deepingfolk and outlanders alike as a meeting place. This hill has seen many confrontations between elves waiting for other elves and woodcutters waiting for their fellows—and between members of rival bands of adventurers.

Hunters' Down is a tranquil ridge cloaked in soaring shadowtop trees. A deep pool rests midway along it, reputed by legend to have magical powers. Many folk camp on the hill, especially near the pool, and the eerie beauty of the place has inspired many lovelorn ballads. In truth, the hill is an ancient elven barrow tomb of the dead from a great battle in the Searing, the first bitter war between rival elven races in the region. The Searing weakened the Fair Folk so much that they could not hurl back the humans who later invaded the Dragon Reach lands.

The dead of both sides, the Hlarr and the Yhendorn, lie buried here together, watched over by a dozen baelnorn<sup>14</sup> (undead elven mages) who sit unsleeping in the dark passages arguing over what the elves should have done. These undying ones are desperate for news of what has befallen since the Searing. They often freely give minor magical items to folk who find a way into the heart of the hill and try to answer their questions or

recount events in Toril without offering any violence. They can also provide healing for the diseased and wounded and recharge most magical items. (This last is their preferred payment for information.)

Everyone who has met the baelnorn has reached them by diving into the depths of the pool. A great hole in its limestone walls that swimmers can readily find opens into the tomb. A magical barrier holds back the waters from flooding the tomb passages, but living things can freely pass through in both directions.

The baelnorn can use their spells and the magical items stored in the tomb. The tomb contains many magical staffs and rods, some of which unleash powers normally found in rings and wands in today's magic. The spell the baelnorn most often employ is cast whenever nonelves dig, burn, or use magic to scry or penetrate into the hill. It is a specialized summoning that instantly brings a crimson death mist<sup>15</sup> from the nearby Glaun Bog to Hunters' Down to attack the offenders.

The baelnorn can also enact a curse on all who defeat the mist and persist in disturbing the Down: a year-long *ironguard* effect that cannot be dispelled. (Recipients cannot touch any metal; it simply falls harmlessly through them!) Like the curse placed on those who disturb Grave Hollow in Archenbridge, the elves use this magic to keep their dead unmolested. Few adventurers dare risk a year of the inability to wear armor or use most tools or weapons—and fewer still can carry away metallic riches from a tomb if they cannot touch metal.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>The location of Hunter's Down is shown on the first map in the section on Highmoon earlier in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Statistics for baelnorn are found in the Monstrous Compendium® Annual, Volume One.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Statistics for crimson death mists are found in the Monstrous Manual tome.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Elminster: Not so. Three remove curses do the trick.



## Moonrise Hill

This moon elven village is known as Ssrenshen<sup>17</sup> to the Fair Folk. Like Bristar it is part of Deepingdale and the source of many skilled elven archers in the army of the Dale. Spear Company of the Swords of Deepingdale is drawn from the young hunters of Ssrenshen.

Moonrise Hill has a tradition of truly awesome archery—such as hitting the eye of a bird in flight a mile away—so warnings to non-Deeping humans to stay away should be heeded. A silent reinforcement of the "Please Keep Clear/Elven Lands" notices posted beyond its perimeter is provided by permanent illusions of nonelven skeletons riddled with elven arrows that stand above the trails leading to the community. (By all rights the arrows ought to fall out, having nothing to bite into on the skeletons, if these were not illusions.)

Even if precocious travelers ignore the warnings and plunge ahead to Moonrise Crag looking for the settlement they know to be located in its shadow, Moonrise Hill can be hard to find: It is all tree homes and earthen storage cellars hidden behind artfully arranged clumps of growing foliage. Only the Bonepile—burnt ground where the bones of a hobgoblin raiding band lie in heaps adorned with the remains of later nuisances, such as owlbears and ettins—gives any sign of the settlement if the elves remain hidden.

Moonrise Crag is a great bald knob of rock traditionally crowned by wyvern lairs. It is now used by wolves as a howling place since elven arrows swept it clear of its more dangerous inhabitants. On the west, it rises from the trees as a ferny meadow that gives way to lichen and broken rocks, and thence to a

bare, windswept rock shoulder that sweeps to a jagged face pointing east. Below this hooked rock face is the old, thickly grown stand of ash, duskwood, and oak trees where the elves dwell. They do not welcome visitors and attack anyone climbing on the crag or trying to mine its flanks.

The reason Moonrise Hill appears in these pages is the "driftgems" that blow from the crag's crumbling eastern face. Moonrise Crag's rock is very porous, and on the exposed, broken east face it has dried out almost to powder. When strong winds blow, the rock crumbles away and blows east into the forest as a gray powder. Sometimes small, but very high-quality rubies hitherto trapped in the rock are blown with it. Driftgems blow most thickly during and after lightning storms and have included rubies as large as the first joint of a human woman's thumb. Walkers in the woods can literally have a fortune in gems blow into their hands!

As word of such astonishing windfalls<sup>18</sup> spread over the years, adventurers traveled here to snatch at riches blowing past them. They attacked the elves – who they erroneously thought must, of course, be simply staggering around under the weight of already gathered rubies - and also took to ambushing each other, as they still do today. This behavior led the elves to become wary, then reclusive, then actively hostile to strangers. In current times, the Bonepile-the only open ground in the path of the driftgems-can be a deadly place when the wind is blowing. Most of the elves do not care about the gems, but also do not like outsiders lurking about, slaying game, setting poorly tended campfires, and threatening them -- so they fire arrows at anyone unfamiliar they see.

<sup>18</sup>Argh. Yet another Voloish pun.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>The location of Moonrise Hill is shown on the first map in the section on Highmoon earlier in this chapter and on the map in the section on Bristar earlier in this chapter.







# Featherdale



Imong the most famous of carrogant Sembian sayings cabout the back-country lbumpkins who dwell to the morth of them is the one

that "More than one Dale just isn't there." Most folk today take this saying to mean that a Sembian cannot even see a settlement when passing through the poor, rustic Dales or think it a boastful reference to the fact that the richest Dale of all, Moondale, was swallowed by Sembia. Others see it as an allusion to vanished Dales such as Sessrendale and Tarkhaldale. The truth is, however, that the phrase is a snide comment about Featherdale.

Unlike most of the other Dales, Featherdale is not a distinct valley. Rather, the Dale is formed from the basin of the lower Ashaba between Blackfeather Bridge—which carries Rauthauvyr's Road across the river—and Feather Falls. The Dale does not have a ruler, a standing army, capital, or any towns. Yet this prosperous farming territory has a character all its own and has twice successfully avoided annexation by Scardale, once similarly rebuffed Battledale, and to astonish all the gods, even denied Sembia's grasping hand thrice.

# The Countryside

The lowlands of the Ashaba are a patchwork of gently rolling farms with waisthigh fieldstone walls and rather haphazard lines of evergreen-planted leves built along the river originally to guard against flooding. (However, since

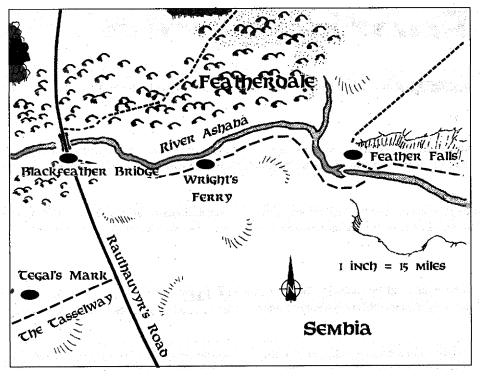
mages and more powerful clergy came to dwell in the Dale, their magic has served to largely prevent the spring floods from exceeding the riverbanks.) Wood lots dot the land here and there, and small ridges of hills cross the Dale on a northeast to southwest axis. Lanes wander up and down the gentle slopes, but visitors will search them in vain for any town or large settlement. Featherdale is truly the pastoral farming country many Sembians imagine most of the Dales are.

# The Featherdarrans

Featherdarrans (or "Featherdalesmen," if you are an ignorant Sembian) are a self-sufficient folk. Every farm and village looks after its own business and its own justice. The feuds that folk of larger, richer lands would expect to erupt are surprisingly few here because folk tend to be easygoing, concerned with the land more than anything else, and gifted by the gods with large shares of common sense. When Scardale poured through Featherdale in Lashan's time, the folk here simply hid their vulnerable children, opened their doors and stables, fed and horsed the invading warriors, and laid low. They knew they could not possibly stop this army, but also that it could not last long without being overwhelmed by a host of hireswords raised by a fearful Sembia, even if the other Dales were defeated in the field against Lashan.

"Stout" and "sturdy" are words often applied to the independent farmers of Featherdale. The unwary visitor who





thinks this is a good place to show off or throw his brawn about will rapidly discover that the Dale is home to a good many not-all-that-retired adventurers, too!

Violent visitors and occasional feuding families aside, Featherdarrans are a tolerant folk. Only setting crops afire or other willful damage to farms unerringly enrages them. They tend to just let folk play pranks, steal a few apples or carrots in passing, and make jokes about thick-skulled hog farmers (there are a *lot* of pigs in Featherdale) because that is the way people are thanks to the gods, and one may as well accept it and waste the least time on upset and dark mutterings. Better to chuckle instead, draw yourself another tankard, and enjoy how well the fields are growing this year.

Folk have always traveled through Featherdale in great numbers. Either merchants

or pilgrims traveling about on business or armies rushing to battle somewhere else (with refugees fleeing before them) seem to be always passing through. Featherdarrans are used to a lot of traffic and finding strangers asleep in their haystacks or under their hedges in the mornings.

Harpers and the good folk of other Dales and civilized lands understand that keeping dry in someone's barn and eating a few of his or her hens' eggs should be worth a coin or two in return. Many a Featherdarran farmer going out to the barn at dawn finds that night visitors have shifted some hay or firewood and left a few coppers or a silver piece tucked into the door latch to be found — but the folk of this Dale have also learned when to turn a blind eye and deaf ear to what visitors are up to.



# Blackfeather Bridge

Blackfeather Bridge's name comes from the black-painted bridge thrown up across the Ashaba long ago to replace one built under Rauthauvyr's orders. This settlement began as a caravan stopover pavilion on the Sembian side of the bridge and has become much more than a resting place on the roadside. In fact, Blackfeather Bridge is now a rapidly growing village of some 70 residents, where formerly it was just an ironshod bridge where 16 haughty Sembian road guards and 16 defiant Lord's Men of Battledale faced each other across the Ashaba. (The two sets of guards were there ostensibly as customs/border watchers. In reality, they were present because Sembia wanted to gently flow north and take over the farming Dales unimpeded, and the folk of all the Dales wanted Sembia to know that they were watching for such a move, and would prevent it.)

Marking both the western end of Featherdale and the busiest bottleneck in the Dragon Reach lands, Blackfeather Bridge is a place many, many folk have passed through on their way to somewhere else. Although it does not yet boast 20 buildings, the Bridge is worth more of a traveler's time than a quick stretch of the legs while the bridge guards argue with a merchant up ahead in the waiting line – but not yet much more than that. This village is a place to buy land and watch it soar in value as the next bustling market town in the region bursts onto the scene, though—a moneychanger/goods swapper with secure warehouses here could make a killing right now.

## Places of Interest in Blackfeather Bridge Shops

Jherald's General Store General Store and Trading Post

8 8 8 8

This trio of ramshackle warehouses serves as a general store and trading post to the caravan trade. Although Jherald can sell you anything from purple candles to a wagon with a fringe on top, you pay stiff prices here-half again as much as you would down the road in Ordulin if you had remembered to buy whatever it was there before you left. Jherald makes no friends, but if you need something badly enough, he is sure to have it-and probably in the precise color and style you are after, too. Just sigh, empty out your purse, and depart poorer, wondering-as many have before you-how Jherald manages to keep his head on his shoulders from year to year given the effrontery of his prices. Not all brigands lurk in the bushes.

# **The Market**Farm Market

8 8

Local wits call this the "Black Market" knowing the term will draw a lot of eager Sembians who will be furious when all they see for sale here is produce. However, a farm market is what this is: a covered pavilion where Featherdarran farmers can rent their hefty offspring out as guards and wagonloaders and sell their farm goods—from chickens and spare horses to vegetables fresh-plucked from the fields. Many caravan masters pick up poultry ready to fire roast, pickles, jams, jellies, sauces, and home-brewed ale and cider for the journey



here. Some even take such stuff on to Hillsfar or the cities of Sembia and peddle it at a horrendous markup.

The wealthiest merchant of the lot at the market is the one who comes north from Ordulin every tenday to sell jars with glass lids and sealing wax to the farmers. He is a prudent man who guards his wares against stone-throwers by threatening to release a bottle spirit.

# Tavern The Blackwater Stout

This tavern just opened this past season, and is still looking for its proper role. It has a dozen upstairs rooms for rent, but only the deaf could sleep there when the taproom below is doing its usual roaring trade—and I do mean roaring!

The Stout serves a home-brewed ale called, naturally enough, Blackwater Stout that I found curiously sweet and wry in taste—as if someone had taken a strong stout and mixed in melted licorice (perhaps that is just what happened). Travelers can enjoy a huge selection of wines, beers, and stronger drink here, equal to the picking at any Sembian roadhouse—including the horrible watered-down and sugared wines called "coolthroat sips" that are now sweeping that realm. Urrghh!

To liven one's drinking, the Stout has laid in the usual salted nuts and roasted almonds plus chilled shrimp and—for a last twist—cream puffs! The puffs are one good way to entice Featherdarran farmers in the door—and the Stout has not missed the other way, either: dancers.

Exotic troupes from Chessenta and Unther alternate with Sembian talent at the Stout. Some of the outrageously dressed folk just dance and pose to minstrelry from below; others play instruments as they prance and are quite good! The dancers parade along an elevated catwalk covered in black velvet and flanked by hanging candlelamps. Ostensibly they are modeling high-fashion Sembian evening wear in their displays, but I have never seen one of the garments they wear bought.

# INN The Riverman

This old and very popular inn sprawls along the northern bank of the Ashaba from the edge of the bridge eastward for nigh on a quarter of a mile. It looks more like a cluster of unrelated buildings that just happen to run into each other than a single structure. Its present form is the result of haphazard growth over the years to meet the ever-increasing demands of folk who want to stay here to enjoy the quiet, rustic comfort of a place that serves good soup and warms the beds in winter, stuffs all guests with great food year-round, and lets everyone lie around beside fires or in moonlit window corners until all hours without ceremony. (Try the buttered toast with mushrooms and oysters or the baked bean-and-goose pies - ahhh!)

As the place has grown, the staff has taken trouble to preserve the treasured atmosphere by purchasing carefully placed sound-deadening and fire-prevention spells and by housing guests as far apart from each other as possible. As a result, strict notices warning guests to please refrain from unleashing *any* magic on the premises are posted prominently, and the owners quietly make veiled comments



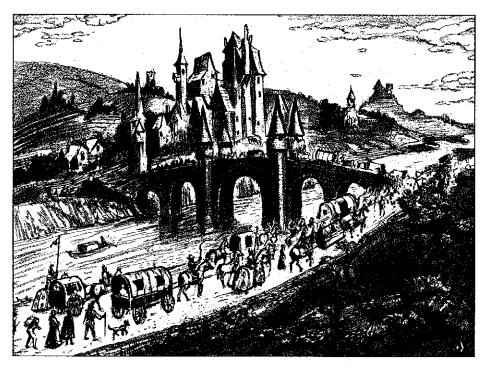
about unwanted spell interactions if pressed for information about the signs.

This silence and discouragement of spellcasting would make the place a thieves' paradise were it not for the resident "skulk." This apparition is really a watchghost named Albrent, a Harper in life, who guards the inn against arson and other crimes. On several occasions, he has saved the place from brigand raids and blazes both deliberately and accidentally ignited. He also serves many lonely travelers as a source of reassuring companionship and advice and is the reason so many lovelorn, run-away maids have stayed on here as staff—until they fall in love with the right guest and are wed. Sigh.

The Riverman is the sort of place that happy ballads have one believe every inn is like—and so few really are. The rooms are

furnished with the leavings of old estate sales and are themselves worth a day's wandering about. Where else can one find the solemn portrait of a Dale lordling (Orstan of Moondale) who posed for posterity wearing a ridiculous high-fashion summer outfit consisting of little more than a haughty sneer and a pair of gauntlets? Or a truckle bed carved by elven crafters into the shape of a gigantic doe, curled up around where an infant would sleep within? Or a plaque bearing witty Dale sayings with even more hilarious spellings and asides?

Do not miss this old landmark; its quiet fame is well justified. A bed here is only 7 sp a night (9 sp if a private room is desired), and meals are only 2 cp extra, however much you eat. Drinks are 5 cp per serving, whatever your fancy, but the wine list is wretched—stick to the home-brewed ale.



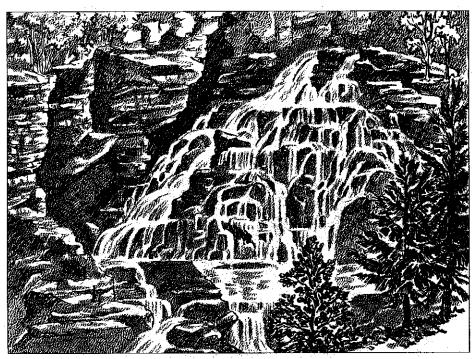


# Feather Falls

Oldest and largest (80 folk live here) of the villages in Featherdale, Feather Falls is the traditional site of the Dale's infrequent Dalemeets. Called to settle disputes that individual folk cannot decide for all, these are four- or five-day free-for-all debates about what the Dale will collectively do. Common agreement is rare, the results are not binding on anyone, and more often than not most time is spent meeting old friends, hitting the noses of old enemies, and talking about the good old days over lots of ale.

The last Dalemeet did decide on something, and as it happens, the decision concerned the only other activity of note that takes place here: All boats and barges traveling the Ashaba must be unloaded and portaged past the Falls on log rollers to be relaunched and reloaded at the wharves on the other side of the Falls or kept loaded and hauled or braked by lots of strong people using large and strong ropes. Attempts to arrange locks or water chutes have all met with disaster; the Ashaba just assumes these represent its new course, and its waters roar down them until they collapse into the main riverbed and widen it a little.

For years the portage was neglected because a local wizard, Cholandrothipe, made a good living diminishing boats—with cargo and all nonliving gear—and carrying them past the Falls in his pockets, moving to *dispel* his *diminish* enchantment when the craft was safely



Feather Falls



back in the water. A team of ambitious magelings sent by a Red Wizard of Thay overwhelmed and murdered the kindly old wizard in spell battle, and river travelers suddenly discovered that they needed the old overgrown portage again.

As the main sources of news and small-item commerce in the Dale are the dozens of small keelboats that ply the Ashaba crewed by rivermen (some of them, despite the title, being women) famous for their gambling and sly ways, this lack of portage was not a matter of indifference to the Featherdarrans. So, by some miracle, the Dalemeet agreed that every Dale landowner should contribute a single gold piece toward the cost of laying in a lot of new logs and of straightening and lengthening the portage to make its slope more gentle. This was done forthwith, refurbishing the portage to the state it is in today.

### Places of Interest in Feather Falls

Feather Falls does have a surprising collection of landmarks, beyond the Falls themselves, which have given their name to the village and to the Dale-though I could not discover how the word feather came to be associated with the tumbling waters in the first place. The village has no watch, no wells (water is dipped from the river), about a dozen trees, lots of mud, and 20-odd buildings, including a smithy, a wagon repair works, and a market hall where farmers can come to sell their grain, corn, cheese, vegetables, salted meat, and home-brewed ale to any interested buyers (usually merchants from Cormyr, Sembia, and Hillsfar). Only one shop here is worthy of note, and an inn or tavern is not among its buildings!

# Unique Sites Cholandrothipe's Tower

The ruined, fire-blackened stone needle that was once the abode of the wizard Cholandrothipe is still the most striking building in town. The wizard's slayers hoped to find a lot of gold and a lot of magic in the Tower. (Cholandrothipe never charged less than 2 gp for the transport of any craft around the Falls, and he usually asked a lot more; average prices were in the 25 to 50 gp range.) However, the very walls of the Tower attacked them as they aroused xorn and golem guardians and set off traps that fired wands of withering and various polymorphing items. The last straw was the unintentional freeing of several hungry oozes from treasure chests. After that, the Thayan magelings fled.

Several adventuring bands have made forays into the Tower since and report finding more deadly traps and guardians, including a watchghost and some *gates* that take intruders to extradimensional rooms where deadly monsters are penned. One can only leave these rooms through different *gates* that deposit one near the ceilings of tall rooms with inescapable, punishing falls awaiting the unprepared.

The Tower is configured as a slender cylinder with a single porchlike entry wing and looks quite small from the outside, but some adventurers say that it has extensive cellars that descend under the Ashaba and rise again on the other side! Some of these subterranean chambers look very old and may well connect to other now-buried structures or to the Deep Realms below. Some



explorers of the Tower have said that they found invisible doors by feel on the spiral stair that ascends through the heart of the wizard's home. Others speak of doors opening through the outer walls high off the ground into other-dimensional treasure vaults whose contents were behind spell webs that could only be passed by someone using the right spell—magics they lacked or could not identify before the mounting death toll robbed their fellows of all enthusiasm for proceeding.

Many folk have died trying to learn the secrets of the Tower and find some of the gold and magic reputed to be there. So far, no magic and only about 30 coins have been brought out. And all the coins were from the pocket of a single robe hanging on a peg in the entry hall. At least one living wall has been encountered in the easily accessible rooms of the Tower, and folk have begun to suspect that kindly old Cholandrothipe may not have been quite so good in nature as they thought he was!

# Temples The House of Morning

The only active temple in Featherdale is this long, low, solid stone edifice sacred to Lathander sited at the foot of the Feather Falls. Here Morninglord Jallian Horgontivar—a tall, patrician man who's only about half as cultured and important as he thinks he is—leads a legion of lesser priests and acolytes in the doing of Lathander's work.

In this temple, Lathander's work is viewed as renting out bare stone rooms at 1 gp per head per night to all travelers who want one. Each boasts a chamberpot and a door, and that is *all*. The temple's

secondary work is seen to be encouraging new business ventures by loaning out money at 2% interest per tenday to anyone who asks.

I can well believe that Horgontivar will retire from his "selfless" service to the god very much enriched if one of the 16 or so other grasping clergy members under him does not do away with him first in their haste to ascend to his polished marble high seat. I find it hard, though, to credit that the work this temple does is as pleasing to Lathander as the work done in his temples elsewhere. The place has nice gardens, though.

#### Mistfall House

This formerly splendid temple to Leira, the Lady of the Mists, now stands empty and abandoned at the head of Feather Falls. Its lower rooms are always damp thanks to the river rushing past, and its cellars are still roamed by monsters despite several attempts to clean the place out. One of the adventurers who explored them said that his band found six subterranean storage levels, the lowest opening into a vast cavern in the Underdark. He turned back at that point while his companions went on; they were never seen again.

This link to the Underdark might well explain the wealth that the veiled priests of this temple always had to spend and also account for some of the mysterious cargo bound for Scardale that appeared as if by magic out of the temple. But just who — or *what* — the Leirans traded with and for what remains a mystery.

Whatever they traded with seems to have allowed this venue to become inac-



tive; no dark caravans have emerged since the Time of Troubles. Yet monsters still come up from the depths from time to time, sending local boys who are fishing through the long-broken oval windows of the riverside temple rooms diving and shrieking for their lives. If one sets a watch against such annoyances, the empty but formerly sumptuous upper ruins of this place are a better place to stay than the House of the Morning.

#### The Temple Beneath the Falls

Behind the cascading waters of the Falls, almost under Mistfall House, are several natural caves and niches where local children have been wont to play, smugglers who do not mind getting drenched have always hidden things (or themselves), and darker things have been done-from kidnappings and slave-trading to the worshiping of fell gods. Just over a hundred summers ago, local farmers took up arms against cultists gathering in one of the caves behind the Falls; however, it is not known if the temple they fought through that day, which was reached by descending a long passage from the back of one of the caves behind the Falls, still exists. Even what deity the cultists venerated has been forgotten, with some tales stating it was Moander, but others insisting it was Juiblex, Ghaunadaur, or Ilsensine.

No word has come down in these tales of gem-encrusted idols or any temple riches at all, but the Falls themselves are said to shroud substantial treasure: the sum of all the coinage, cargo crates, and trade bars lost over the years from tumbling or shattered barges that strayed over the Falls. The Falls are also rumored to

hide various stolen items deliberately placed in crevices behind the cascade or washed down from upriver off of people slain in battle.

The folk of the Falls laughed when I asked them if people still went under the water to worship, and they said I was not the first traveler to ask about such things. The rivermen even tell tales of chanting that can be heard near the Falls on moonless nights—but then, rivermen will say anything, especially to get a rise out of strangers.

# Shop Darwinn's Trading Post General Store

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This large, well-stocked general store is the cultural center of Feather Falls. Almost all the villagers drop by daily to buy the fresh milk, bread, and cheese that Darwinn's sons bring in from nearby farms every dawn on a creaking wagon that must awaken many folk. Prices here tend to be 10% above the average found in larger centers where such a thing as competition exists, but what is asked is not unreasonable. The friendly, chatty proprietor, Ulwyn Darwinn, certainly tries to stock everything one might need, from hose-stretchers for travelers who get wet in the river to boats and barges for those who lose their vessels!

Darwinn even sells parchment, inks, some quite nice ready-made gowns from shops in Sembia—and *potions* of *frying* and of *healing*. The potions cost 300 gp each. He sells no more than one of each kind to a traveler, and no amount of bribery or threats can make him stop smiling and reveal his source!



# Wright's Ferry

This hamlet is home to about 30 folk and is named for a heavily used horse ferry. Visitors to the spot find the ferry, a lot of orchards, three aromatic pig farms with capacious mud wallows, a river pump and horse pond, and Featherdale's only tavern here. Perhaps fittingly, the tavern is called the Ferryman's Folly. No shops of note exist in town, but the ferrymen seem to have a lot of old belongings that they can sell to anyone who expresses a need for something-belongings "carelessly left behind" by folk they punched into the river, no doubt. Something a little more unusual is also found in Wright's Ferry: a ring of stones known as the Chessmen of Valsprendar, linked (as all such sites seem to be) to many tales of magic.

Unique Sites Albottle Ferry

At this busy crossing, travelers are conveyed across the Ashaba (which is usually placid at this locale) by huge draft horses on either bank. The horses tow a barge back and forth by means of long ropes stretched through tall timber guide frames. The guide frames also serve to winch the ropes aloft to allow boats going up and down the Ashaba to pass by unencumbered. The frames are visible for some distance along the river.

The ferry costs 7 sp per head to cross. The price includes a single mount, but one must pay 3 sp more for each additional pack animal or per cart. Full trade wagons are 2 gp each.

The ferry is run by a pair of mightythewed brothers, Dregon and Flender Albottle, who can call on a truly gigantic cousin, Auglaer, if anyone disputes a fare. Auglaer looks like he has ogre blood in him. (I once saw an unruly passenger knocked out cold by one brother and dumped off his horse into the water to drown or be revived by the Ashaba as the gods willed—the ferrymen ignored his drifting form thereafter.) There is no sign of anyone named Wright. Perhaps the name refers to a now-dead wainwright or wheelwright.

#### The Chessmen of Valsprendar

This circle of man-high standing stones is located just south of the ferry in a field of barley carefully cultivated around it. I asked the field's farmer why he went to so much trouble to avoid the stones (Since the stones clearly hover a finger's width *off* the ground and are not buried in it, moving them might not be so great a chore.) He shook his head and told me he had no wish to anger the "ghost of Valsprendar."

Valsprendar, it seems, was the nowdead mage who enspelled these "chessman" stones and was later buried in the circle. (No, I did not dig in the circle, though I have heard about others that have and not enjoyed the result.) If a chessman is moved entirely off the bare patch its shadow causes, a shimmering portal appears in its place and a monster erupts out of this to attack everyone near, marauding until slain. The push of a finger will move a chessman if a living being is attached to that finger, though the strongest weapon blows and gale winds have no similar effect. Replacing the stone has no effect on dismissing the



monster, though this does close the portal.

Eleven stones float here, and moving each has the same effect every time, though the monsters vary. All the summoned creatures seem to be of sorts that can live aboveground and on dry land, it seems. Where they are drawn from and why Valsprendar crafted this whole thing remains a mystery, even to Rhauntides (I asked).<sup>1</sup>

If all 11 stones are moved and all 11 monsters fought and killed between the same dawn and dusk, a *gate* opens that leads into a many-roomed refuge that Valsprendar made, dwelt in, or discovered. Certain wizardly lorebooks record that a piece of the *Shattered Sword* can be found in this refuge, but it is so well guarded that no one has yet managed to carry it away. Just what guardians protect it or what else is to be found in this refuge, I know not.

The lorebooks *do* speak of the *Shattered Sword*. It was an enchanted blade wielded by the Laughing Princess of Deepingdale against the Twelve Dancing Wizards, who struck it out of her hand with blasting spells before they met their doom. The blade remained spell-linked to her, however. As her *dweomerdance* drained the sorcery from the Thayans, the spell magic coursed through the blade, which broke under the strain into nine pieces. All of the resulting nine shards now possess strange magical powers—and all of them, legend whispers, lie

hidden in the Dales. More about this fascinating weapon I cannot say—but more than a dozen adventuring bands have battled monsters in the barley field in the last year for the chance to acquire one piece of it. Perhaps a mightier mage than I could reveal more.<sup>2</sup>

# Tavern The Ferryman's Folly

!! DD

This ramshackle, rotting place is plagued by river damp. The damp even seems somehow to have gotten itself into the beer. Certainly mine was watery enough and tasted of mildew—but maybe the tinge of mold came from the mug.

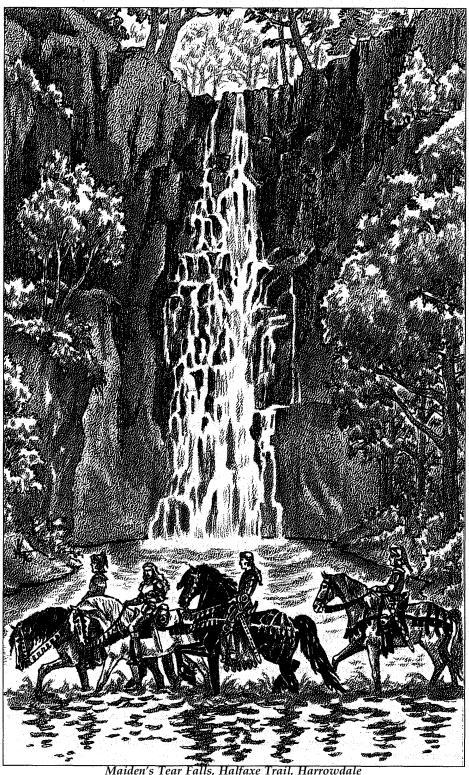
The Folly is a sorry place when compared to the splendid alehouses that Cormyr, Sembia, and better Dales can offer—but it is cheap, cheerful, and visited by just about every farmer and riverman who can reach it. Of course, for the rivermen, that is every last one of them. The rivermen do a lot of brawling here when they have had too much to drink. Kindly farmers usually dump them into a nearby hay mow to flounder around snarling incoherent curses and insults at each other until they fall asleep.

For all this rustic buffoonery, the place has a certain charm. Before they get too full of ale, rivermen can tell great tall tales. . . .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: Let it be noted that Volo also asked *me* and so learned just about all of the details he recounts so glibly here. Ye do not think he fought any monsters, do ye?). He unaccountably neglects to mention our interview here. Hmm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: Sigh. Aye, aye—all right. Seek ye out the *Shattered Sword* in Appendix II. Tomb robbers and magic devourers, the lot of ye. . . .





Maiden's Tear Falls, Halfaxe Trail, Harrowdale
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# Harrowdale



he oldest surviving Dale is Harrowdale, an often-overlooked land of farmers and foresters that is the quiet neighbor of brash, lively,

ambitious Scardale. The inhabitants of Harrowdale ("Harrans" to each other) are viewed by Sembians and even some other Dalesfolk as the original and complete country bumpkins. This is, however, the worst sort of sneering ignorance. In what way are a people backward when they think that warfare and strife are a waste of time and dull, placid peace most benefits all?

This philosophy has not stopped Harrans from taking advantage of the recent trading boom that has come their way thanks to the chaos Lashan left in Scardale. Their efforts and the confusion have made Harrowdale town (perhaps temporarily) the most important port in the Dales. The Dale has suddenly become a trading crossroads, and folk all over the Inner Sea are beginning to take notice of this quiet country of hedgerows, copses, leaping deer, old abandoned steadings, and sleepy sages.

Once this land was called Velarsdale after its founder, and Harrowdale town was Velar. The Dale became Halvan's Dale briefly and forcefully when the ruthless lord Halvan the Dark, who tried to cut a way through the Elven Court woods only to perish with the notorious Halfaxe Trail only extending halfway to his goal, was in power. The Dale's farmers, justly proud of their multiple-prowed plows (a Dale invention), quickly corrupted that name into the present Harrowdale after Halvan's fall.

Harrowdale settled into comfortable prosperity over a century ago. Today it produces a lot of beef, mutton, wool, and cheese, some respectable ale, and small amounts of superior fruit, furs, and lumber. It has always needed to import metal ores, refined metal, and metal goods such as tools and weapons, but the Dale's increasing sophistication has also led to a recent steady demand for paper, silk, lace, glassware, and both spices and crafted art from far shores.

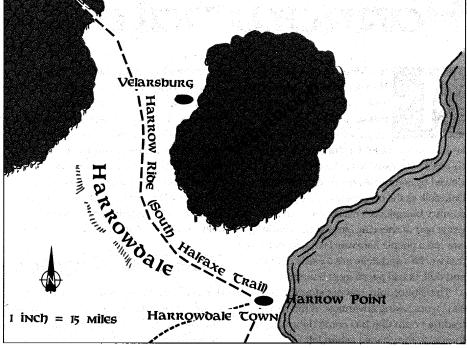
# The Countryside

Harrowdale consists of an old, shallow valley whose river, the Velar, dried up long ago and some gently rolling wooded uplands to the north and east of Harrow Vale that are wrapped around the old, deep forest known as the Velarwood. The land in Harrowdale shows its age. Roads cut through hills in deep, time-worn ditches. The traces of earlier habitation-crumbling stone walls, bridges that lead to nowhere, and old millstones-are everywhere. Hedgerows mark field edges, and copses of duskwood, maple, and pine have been left on most hilltops to keep the winds away. Extensive and old apple, pear, and grus-grus orchards grow throughout the Dale, and the folk of the Dale have learned to love the land and work with it, replenishing and not despoiling the forest just as the folk of Deepingdale do.

# The Harrans

Harrans are a quiet, confident people. After all, why should they try to impress anyone with their wealth and power as





the fops of Sembia do, when their farms have stood twice as long as that realm has been around? They know they are rightfolly part of Faerûn and important for what they are, not how many coins they can swiftly make by sharp dealing. Local folk see to local justice and have a clear grasp of and full support for the laws and edicts proclaimed by the Council of the Seven Burghers, the rulers of Harrowdale and its wealthiest citizens.

The watch, the constables in Harrowdale town, is the Dale's only police force. Save for the occasional fence of stolen goods or drunk and disorderly person, its members deal almost exclusively with the antics of outlanders, not native Harrans. If, as a visitor, you feel watch officers are doing what they are named for—watching you continuously—you are right: Outlanders are their business and the folk to which they pay dili-

gent attention. This vigilance, plus a fine grasp of just when to look the other way makes the watch one of the best police forces anywhere and keeps Harrowdale town relatively safe for all. Though the watch may tolerate a little extra roughhousing around the Fall of Stars adventurers' club or near dockside dives when drunken sailors punch each other, due to the efforts of its members one can see young lasses walking the streets home by night alone and unafraid because following each of them at a discreet distance are watch officers, and the women know it. Elsewhere in the Dale, the veteran mounted rangers known as Gray Riders, who normally watch for monsters and bandits in the nearby woods, can come riding up to aid citizens in dispensing local justice at any time (though they cannot arrest anyone) just like the numerous retired adventurers do in Deepingdale and Eeatherdale.



## Harrowdale Town

Harrowdale town is probably the one Dales settlement that has kept more of its old buildings than any other. The town is a small and pleasant place rising from an old fishing harbor to encircling arms of forest, and its harbor is currently enjoying unheard-of popularity thanks to the chaos reigning in Scardale. In large part due to the professional diligence of the watch, the town is perhaps the quietest and safest capital of such size in all the Dales. Other nice features of Harrowdale town include the presence of hand pumps and drinking cups at several major corners, and the prevalence of old, charmingly gnarled shade trees.

The watch's proud, no-nonsense captain, a female elven fighter and mage named Ellarian Dawnhorn, has little time for adventurers. The presence of the Fall of Stars in her duty area is a constant irritant to her, and some of its mightier patrons delight in humiliating her. I would advise going carefully if you ride into Harrowdale town in adventuring garb, for Ellarian's eye will be constantly on you, awaiting transgressions she can punish.

One positive effect of Ellarian's enthusiasm for law and order is that merchants can leave doors open and goods unguarded at all hours, secure in the knowledge that the watch never sleeps. Thieves whose fingers start to itch at reading these words are warned that the watch and the Seven Burghers can call on certain senior members of the Fall of Stars to hunt lawless elements—and that the last six master

thieves to operate in town were all fatally apprehended while engaged in their work.

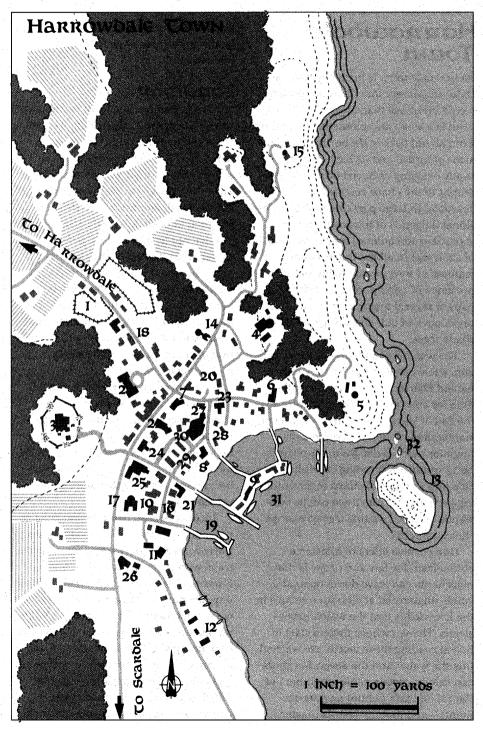
### Landmarks

Visitors to Harrowdale town readily recognize the grand Council Hall, where the seven wealthiest Harrans meet to make their ruling decisions and have apartments for their use when in town. The Seven Burghers are respected, if not always loved, and hold their seats until resignation or death. When a seat on the Council opens up, local heralds are called in to conduct a survey to determine the wealthiest Harran not yet on the Council—who, if willing, assumes the vacant seat. It should be noted that the Burghers' decisions generally aid the wealthy in becoming richer and the present order of things in the Dale to remaining the same.

At the meeting of Melurk Street and Lancegallop Lane, just down the street from the Council Hall, stands the watch barracks—an impressive, defensible building that sports catapults on its battlements to defend the harbor. The watch barracks also houses the Dale's courtrooms and jail.

Across the road from the barracks is the muddy, bustling, fish-scented yard of Harrow Market. Here everyone comes to trade with everyone, and the Seven Burghers have wisely kept vendor fees to 4 sp per stall or cart per day. The holders of such miniature shops merely take on one or two side-partners who peddle a single type of item, such as throwing knives, cheeses, slowcandles, or thread and charge them the daily fee as rent. This keeps the place crowded and vibrant and has led to the opening of at







### Harrowdale Town Map Key

- **1.** Goldenleaf Stables (horsebreeding stables)
- **2.** Council Hall (meeting hall of the Seven Burghers)
- 3. Halvan's Keep (ruin)
- **4.** The House of the Singing Harp (temple of Oghma)
- 5. Harrow Point Light (lighthouse)
- 6. Gunderman Brewery (brewery)
- 7. Watch barracks
- **8.** Treskeden House (merchant coster headquarters)
- **9.** The Fouled Line (tavern)
- **10.** The Lady of Good Fortune (temple of Tymora)
- **11.** Shaleel Warehouses (Harrow-coaster coster warehouses)
- 12. Fishermens' huts
- 13. Two Rocks (island)
- **14.** The House of Mystra (temple of Mystra)
- **15.** Erethun's Tower (residence of Erethun Rivenstave)
- 16. Cart Street
- 17. Melurk Street
- **18.** Lancegallop Lane
- **19.** The Harrow Plow pier
- 20. Harrow Market
- **21.** Harrowcoaster House (merchant coster headquarters)
- **22.** Velarstown Silver and Jewelry (jewelry, goldsmith's, and silversmith's shop)
- **23.** Willowman Trading Post (general store)
- 24. Toss Your Tankard (tavern)
- **25.** The Anchorage (inn)
- **26.** The Redmark (inn)
- **27.** The Fall of Stars (adventurers' club)
- 28. Dendever Street
- 26. Moonside Lane
- 30. Stink Alley
- **31.** The Heart of the Harbor (pier)
- **32.** The Shoulder (small islands)

least three local shops as stall-holders made good. The cramped conditions also ensure that no market vendor is able to provide serious competition for a shopkeeper in town.

From the market, Dendever Street runs past the Fall of Stars club, which warrants its own entry in this book. The road continues straight down to the harbor, where a rickety wharf on pilings, known as the Heart of the Harbor or just "the Heart," supports the roaring Fouled Line tavern and several net huts.

The harbor shelters in the lee of the rocky, windswept islet of Two Rocks, which is popularly believed to be the location where such famous Dragon Reach pirates as Urthag the Knife and the Masked Marquis buried their treasurethough not a coin of these fabled hoards has ever been found. The Council is debating building a sea tower bristling with catapults here to make Harrowdale Harbor more secure against privateer night raids, of which there were many during the Time of Troubles and one or two per season since. Everyone seems to agree that this would be a good idea except the newest Burgher, the wizard Erethun Rivenstave, who balks at the cost of the fortalice and the proposed bridge linking it to the shore along the existing line of seagull-haunted rocks known as the Shoulder.

Legitimate shipping is guided to the harbor—or, if boats are sailing past the Dale, kept clear of the ripper rocks just offshore here—by the Harrow Point Light. Hesketh Aldunn, the lighthouse keeper, is full of old yarns, the tangled genealogies of Harrans, town gossip, and old local legends and is quite willing to impart these all night to anyone who



brings him free food and drink. He sleeps by day, and his sense of duty does not let him leave the lighthouse by night to dine.

South of the Heart is the deepest part of the harbor where visiting merchant ships run in. They tie up at the stout old pier known to sailors up and down the Reach as the Harrow Plow because of the shape of its splayed seaward end. Though some locals dismiss the folk tale as "errant piffle," the Harrow Plow is said to have been built by merfolk at the behest of the long-dead wizard Ardalest the Aspirant Magister—so-called because he challenged three different Magisters for the title, losing each time but somehow surviving.

South of the Harrow Plow pier, the harbor trails away into a pebble beach that in turn gives away to rocks. The pebbled shore is home to the hardy fisherfolk of Harrowdale, who dwell in huts amid a confused litter of nets, jetsam, drying racks, and boats. These tireless harvesters of the sea pull out at dawn each day and then run back home with a day's fish at sunset.

A recent Sembian fashion rage is to have a wall painting of these rustic, silver-weathered huts and boats hanging from one's sitting room wall. The picture always has a glorious sunset in the background—and astonished fishermen turning a beautiful mermaid out of their nets as its focal point. The demand for such works is so strong that a half-dozen or more painters can always be seen at work capturing the romance of the fisherfolk's huts on large wooden boards. The boards are used because with paintings of this great a size they are the only material that survives the rugged roads

or damp sea voyages south to the great cities of Sembia.

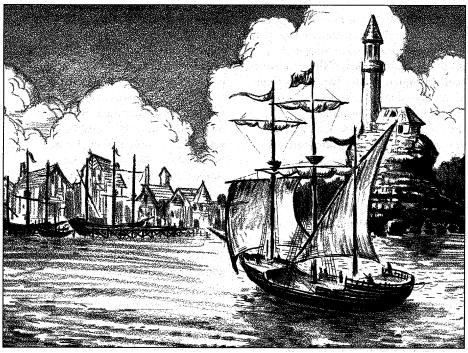
The visitor who strolls along the shore sees only one other landmark of interest: an isolated tower with a gatehouse and stable atop a hill that marks the northern edge of the town. This is the abode of the mysterious mage Erethun Rivenstave, newest of the Seven Burghers. He has served for less than a decade and is widely mistrusted by the locals, who do not know where he came from or where he got his fabulous wealth. (Frankly, they suspect that the truth about both queries would not be to their liking.) Guests are not welcome at Erethun's Tower and are kept away both by trained dogs and by unseen-possibly undead – guardians.

A larger and more famous tower stands in Harrowdale town. It is the ruined home of Halvan the Dark, the infamous founder of Halfaxe Trail. Like the Fall of Stars, Halvan's Keep has its own entry in this guidebook. Other local features of interest follow directly.

## Places of Interest in Harrowdale Temples

The House of the Singing Harp
This grand, turreted old stone house
stands atop a pleasant grassy hill
overlooking Harrow Market and is
dedicated to the service of Oghma.
Visiting songsters and bards are lodged
here for free if they agree to participate
in the worship services to Oghma at
dawn, highsun, and dusk. Here the
accent is not on libraries but on
minstrelry and in going out and
collecting oral tales, news, rumors,
legends, and the like. The two dozen





priests who dwell here are building a solid and thorough collection of local lore in their minds.

Learned Father Wise Anticipator
Teredic Alton (respectfully addressed, as
are many senior priests of Oghma, as
"learned father") is high priest of the
House of the Singing Harp. He is a fierytempered man born and raised in
Harrowdale. He lends his temple's aid to
adventurers in need of lore or healing in
return for services to the town. Usually
he requires those he aids to clear out
some recent group of brigands plaguing
the Dale, but sometimes he asks them to
go on a monster-fighting foray along the
newly reopened Halfaxe Trail.

Visitors to the temple should not miss traveling to the High Holy Place in the top room of the temple's turret where a sacred, enchanted harp plays by itself.

Aside from its self-playing abilities and the capacity to levitate off its table from time to time and change hue just as spontaneously, the magical powers of the harp are unknown. It is guarded at all times by two priests who listen to its tunes. (The priests will not discuss the harp's origin or precise powers.) The Singing Harp, as it is known, is said to impart messages from Oghma and answers to prayer queries directed to him. It does this by means of the songs it chooses: the name of the tune it chooses to play or the lyrics in a song that match a played musical phrase bear on a matter under consideration by the priests of the House.

All guests may view the *Singing Harp*, but are asked to leave all personal magic, weapons, or musical instruments outside the room. It is an



offense punishable by death to try to take or harm the harp and a lesser one to try to play the harp or sing in its presence—particularly if these activities seem designed to alter the harp's tune at the time. Playing the harp or singing are punishable by payment of a fine *and* the doing of penance in the form of a dangerous service. The alternative to the fine and penance is a period of spell-enforced temple servitude.

#### The House of Mystra

This recently completed temple stands hard by the Market, and its priest and priestesses perform minor magics to impress onlookers and in return for fees. This unusual lapse of magely dignity is due in part to desperation: The folk of Harrowdale have largely ignored the faith of Mystra—and now this temple—throughout the years and continue to do so.

Wizards - from the mages led by Halvan the Dark to the present Burgher Erethun Rivenstave – just are not liked and trusted in Harrowdale, and Spell-Priestess Llewan Aspenwold has labored in vain to build popular support for the Lady of Mysteries here in Harrowdale. She has only three clergy members dwelling with her, and normally only visiting wizards join them in devotions to Mystra. Night services often involve the casting of spells with spectacular aerial displays straight upward to awe local citizens, but such practices have backfired once or twice, making the clergy members even less trusted.

Llewan has taken to aiding visiting adventurers in order to gain friends and

make local folk respect the temple. This has had the benefit of bringing her regular business from the Fall of Stars, whose members always want to buy a copy of this or that spell, or to purchase or sell rare spell components (booty brought back from their own ventures) or acquire tutoring in the spellcasting arts. It remains to be seen if this holy house will survive in peace-loving, stodgy Harrowdale or if it will have to relocate to Scardale or some other more cosmopolitan locale.

#### The Lady of Good Fortune.

This center of reverence to Tymora, goddess of luck and patroness of adventurers, is a grand-looking building in the old seaside part of town. Travelers entering Harrowdale town are often astonished – and delighted – to see the six beautiful human and half-elven lady priestesses of the temple dancing and performing other aerial acrobatics on high wires stretched over Melurk Street from the temple or between the two wings of the holy place. These spectacles lure unbelievers but are primarily a daily testing of the faith. Anyone who does not perform feats of daring cannot truly worship Tymora, the Reverend Sister Seresha Auric, half-elven high priestess of this temple, believes.

This sun-bronzed adventuress seeks to convert worshipers of Waukeen, especially those disheartened by their goddess's disappearance and unimpressed with the church of Lliira (most often visiting Sembian merchants) to embrace the way of Lady Luck. She is always hiring adventurers to undertake

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: Daily magic shows to impress small children of all ages! Hmmph! They'll be playing nobles' birthday parties next!



missions to enrich the temple and enhance its reputation.

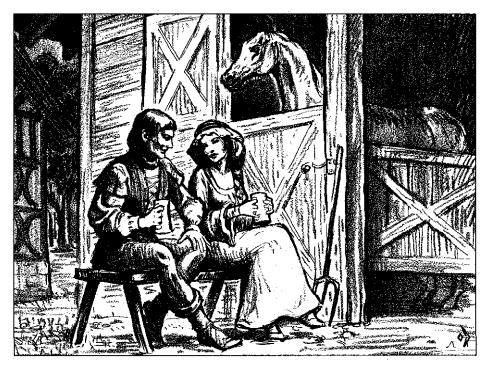
A typical such hiring involves a joint expedition to Myth Drannor or another known danger spot and a split of any treasure gained between the temple and the adventurers. The priestesses furnish the adventurers with potions of healing, potions of extra-healing, and helpful scrolls beforehand and send one of their number along to accompany the adventuring band. The adventurers are charged to bring the priestess's remains back if she falls in battle. More than one adventuring band now shies away from these ready arrangements-even though food, board, and healing at the temple are guaranteed both before and after the expedition-because the priestesses have been known to behave very recklessly during the forays.

# Shops Goldenleaf Stables

Horsebreeding Stables

This large, tastefully well-kept complex on the northwestern edge of town along both sides of Lancegallop Lane is far and away the best breeding stables in the Dalelands. Fine riding mounts and ladies' palfreys are the order of the day here, not draft horses or war horses. The training, bloodlines, and care here are so good that wealthy buyers flood up even from Cormyr and Sembia—two lands who can boast their own exceptional and famous horsebreedem—to carry away Goldenleaf stock.

The owner, Sheera Goldenleaf, is one of the Seven Burghers. She is an outgoing, friendly elven woman of breathtaking





beauty who seems liked by all—and returns the favor. A mage-thief only recently retired from adventuring, Sheera is very wealthy and can well afford her kind sponsorship of the local needy and various Harran organizations and concerns. She heads a staff of skilled horsefolk; notable among them are seven skilled elven archers armed with "elfshot" shafts who defend the stable compound.<sup>2</sup>

Expect to pay no less than 125 gp for a mount here. Sheera prefers to match horse to rider in long-term training and that can easily cost another 50 gp.

# Gunderman Brewery

Brewery

This deliberately ramshackle, rustic old barn of a place is owned by a half-elf (Gunderman Brewmaster, whose nickname is, inexplicably, "Horca") and run by several gruff human ex-adventurers and a bevy of gnomes and dwarves who seem to constantly be digging out new storage cellars down below or installing new pumps to keep sea water seepage out of the cellars they have already dug. The aromatic main vat room is all most visitors see of the inner workings of Gunderman's pride and joy, but he hands out sample mugs of his main product, Old Smoke ale, there.

Old Smoke is a mellow, smoky-tasting, golden-hued ale beloved of connoisseurs throughout the Inner Sea lands. A keg of it can bring 80 gp in Mulmaster or Telflamm or 70 gp in Sembia or Cormyr, where supplies are more plentiful.

Gunderman has three strong sons, clever giants who never seem quite aware of their own strength. Their mighty brawn provides much local entertainment, as they are always casually lifting up small horses to retrieve copper pieces they have dropped or unintentionally tearing doors, lids, and shutters they are trying to open off their hinges.

#### Harrowcoaster House

Caravan Shipping, Spices, and Textiles

8 8 8 8 8

This office and packing shop of the Harrowcoaster coster is where fine glassware, textiles (especially cloth-of-gold and silk woven with designs), and spices (notably nutmeg and saffron) are brought from the pier under guard, unpacked, and repacked in smaller horse crates or wagon boxes for shipment inland to Cormyr and the interior Dales. This coster is run by Captain Durana Shaleel, one of the Seven Burghers and a seafarer who spends a lot of time talking to sailors down on the docks. They revere her as "the Light of Harrowdale," and some of them seek her out and touch her hand or hair when they end a voyage to win luck for their next one. This coster formerly bought produce throughout the Dales to ship back across the Inner Sea on the ships that had imported the fine wares they sell, but there was some trouble between them and the Treskeden coster. Harrowcoaster coster now exports only Old Smoke ale from the local Gunderman Brewery instead.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>These "elfshot" shafts are enchanted *arrows of paralysis* +3 that vanish when they strike a target. They inflict no physical damage, but cause their victims to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation at a -3 penalty or be paralyzed for 4d6 rounds. The Goldenleaf archers are mainly 10th-level fighters specialized in the use of the long bow with THAC0s of 11 (10 including their elven bow bonus). Two are 9th-level fighters/10th-level mages with THAC0s of 12 (11 including their elven bow bonus). They tend to patrol in pegasi-mounted patrols of 1d4+2 archers.



#### Shaleel Warehouses

Harrowcoaster Coster Warehouses



These three well-guarded buildings are where the repacked goods imported by the Harrowcoaster staff are stored until the coster agents bring in orders for their sale. Harrowcoaster's agents travel the Dales regularly and can readily be recognized by the coster's badge on their wagons and tabards. This badge, a circle of gold coins around a ship (a "coaster," of course) under sail, is painted much larger on these all-stone warehouses and on nearby Harrowcoaster House.

By importing goods that have not been preordered by clients, the Harrow-coasters take larger business risks, but can often fill an order in days rather than months, an ability that has delighted many clients. After all, it might be the work of a tenday to get a particular type of genuine Calishite dancer's costume made of silk veils brought to, say, Mistledale. It would usually, however, be the work of several months to import six or more identical genuine Calishite costumes in various specific sizes—unless one calls on the Harrowcoaster coster.

#### Treskeden House

Caravan Shipping and Produce



Owned and run by Helena Treskeden, another of the Seven Burghers and a shrewd, dignified matron, this old, wellestablished coster brings the goodness of the Dales to the mouths of all Faerûn by means of a network of tireless caravans that creak around the Dales buying up produce and bringing it to Harrowdale for shipment all over the Inner Sea lands. Although the coster is well-liked and trusted by Dale farmers, who readily welcome in folk wearing the coster's badge of a hand cupping an apple, dark rumors hint that the Treskedens recently discouraged the Harrowcoasters from competing with them by less than scrupulous means—involving magical blackmail, sabotage of wagons and threats of worse, and a few knifings.

Rumor also whispers that, before Helena's time, the fortunes of the house were initially built around the use of a magical gate that could whisk goods to and from the notorious Skullport under the city of Waterdeep, half a world away, in a single breath. The price of using this gate was apparently sentients who were sacrificed to the monsters who controlled its western end. These monsters ultimately devoured Tondar Treskeden, Helena's grandsire, when he courageously destroyed the gate after the monsters had taken to using it for nightly prowls through Harrowdale, devouring all who caught their fancy. It is certain that there are walled-off areas in Treskeden House to which none are admitted, but coster officials insist that these are family crypts.

Treskeden House's wealth is built on fast transport, so that goods are not spoiled when they arrive at distant markets, and the careful tending of cargo. Great trouble is taken to avoid bruising the produce, and rooted plants are transported in travel casks in soil, where appropriate, and watered along the way. Treskeden coster always needs new guards and scouts for its caravans.



#### Velarstown Silver and Jewelry

Jewelry, Precious Knickknacks, Engraving, Goldsmithing, and Silversmithing

8 8 8 8 8

Alosius Grimwarrow grumbles and stumps through life. He is locally famous for his biting sarcasm and eccentricities, such as always wearing a turbanlike hat of knotted rags when going out in the sun, for example, and talking to his hands as if they were mute, slow-witted, naughty servants. Behind this manner Alosius is a clear-thinking, shrewd merchant blessed with much foresight and a thorough knowledge of human nature-gifts that have made this business so profitable that he was able to retire from his dangerous career as a silver merchant running caravans from mines to markets, which involved fighting brigands on almost every trip. However that adventuring career won him the guardians who now patrol his crowded shop: two mated pairs of two brilliantly hued winged serpents from far Zakhara.

Grimwarrow can also call on his small family for help. He has two daughters known locally for their monkeylike agility who spent their wild youthful days climbing around the roofs and trees of Harrowdale town, playing pranks on citizens and befriending visiting merchants. They wield slings and fire sleepenvenomed darts from their hand crossbows like veteran warriors—and are skilled gemcutters to boot.

In this shop, the Grimwarrows import silverware, goldwork, small gems, and pewter and pewterwork for sale in the Dales interior They are quite competent at remounting gems and at melting down precious metals and crafting them into new shapes. They regularly (as their sign proclaims) do chasing engraving and adornment. I suspect they

quite often do this to stolen goods to disguise them for resale with a little less boldness than is implied in their advertisement

### Willowman Trading Post

General Store

This crammed, dusty, old general store is a gloomy place crowded with more odd implements and items than I could identify in an exploration that lasted most of a day. Not only is this place the very gift of the gods for someone trying to find a rare hardware item—a triple hinge, say, or a left-handed double-ended scythe—but everything is a bargain. This is a shop not to be missed.

# Taverns The Fouled Line

!! DD

The Line is a rough establishment that stinks of fish, sweat, dead floating things, and salt. The decor consists of old, rotten nets slung along the walls and ceiling that are festooned with dried giant squids, shark jaws, narwhal tusks, and other grisly relics of the deeps.

Sailors enjoy the strong ale served here, and they can also get garlic butter drizzled over biscuits or butter tarts served burning hot for 2 sp per plate. The sailors do not like sharing the place with landlubbers. They delight in dunking rude or arrogant folk into the bay at a cost of 4 sp, paid to the tavernmaster (if you pay, you get to haul on the lever yourself if you want), by tricking them into standing over a trapdoor operated by a lever under the bar that dumps them straight into the bay not all that far from where the tavern privies empty out. I am well acquainted with the trapdoor's





outlet through personal experience, and do not recommend this place because of its churlish clientele.

# Toss Your Tankard

This whimsically named alehouse recalls a brawl in which the air filled with newly purchased pewter tankards as rival mercenary bands sought to punish each other over the heads of their Sembian Paymasters, who were seated between them. It should be noted that such behavior is not welcome here now, as the tavern signboard shows: It depicts a drinker risen from his seat to hurl his tankard—and the barkeeper, apron flapping, running full-tilt at the drinker's backside with a pike thrust forward to make a—telling point.

Colorful tales aside, most visitors find the Tankard to be a clean, well-lit establishment.

Light meals of buns filled with sliced cheeses and meats can be had, as can brandies and cordials. The tables and booths are far enough apart to allow lounging and, more importantly, a measure of discreet privacy for patrons discussing business matters—which is what this place always seems to be full of, no matter what the hour. The house seems to cater to merchants who stay at their seats for hours, using the place as an on-the-road business office.

#### lnns

The Anchorage

!!!! bbbb

I found the Anchorage to be a good inn, with soundproof rooms thanks to thick stone walls hung with tapestries. Its sleeping chambers each feature a fire grate and sufficient furnishings to make them feel like home and not a sleeping stable for humans.



A room costs 14 sp per head per night, including meals, and stabling for one beast, Drinks beyond milk or mintwater cost extra. Wagon stowage and shelter and care for additional horses are also extra.

The staff consists of four families, so there are plenty of children about to fetch and carry. These younglings are thankfully quiet and well-behaved; they are of the shy sort, rather than being little loudmouthed self-anointed heroes. Overall, this is a safe, pleasant place to stay

#### The Redmark



This recently opened inn on the southern edge of town caters to the rich Sembian visitor, which seems odd given its location hard by the fishy smells and litter of the fisherfolk's huts. It has been welcomed by travelers and the folk of the Anchorage alike for its relief of overcrowding at the older inn due to the recent increase in shipping into and out of Harrowdale Harbor.

Everything at the Redmark is big and new It features bathtub-fitted suites, rental meeting rooms, and a dining hall that specializes in serving patrons with fresh seafood-and, it seems, suffocating them under a veritable jungle of hanging plants. Nothing on the menu or in the service here can really be criticized, but the place has the lack of soul that all new hostelries necessarily suffer from. The staff maintains a distant professional manner enviable in the overcrowded inns of Sembia. but seldom met with in the friendlier Dales. (The candor and common-sense consideration of Dalesfolk becomes something that even the haughtiest traveler comes to value and rely on.)

There is a mystery associated with the Redmark. Named for Orlyn's Redmark, a

now-defunct mercenary band its builders Gathgand Wyrlder and Bergun Zeltyl were part of, it was put up with their payout shares. These two proud owners have now disappeared, and various rough-looking folk have shown up as guests and carefully dismantled their rented rooms, obviously looking for something—probably coins. Local rumor concludes that the inn builders used money that did not belong to them, and their former companions-at-arms are looking to regain whatever is left. No one has tried to assume ownership of the inn in the meantime, and the staff are now running it as a collective.

Wyrlder and Zeltyl are thought to be dead or on the run (probably the former). The most persistent former Redmark guest-searchers are known to be Othna Barada, a priestess of Tempus who wears spiked gauntlets and lashes out at anyone who asks her questions; Talgos Twilight, a thief who recently acquired a hot reputation in Impiltur; and the mage Skeldor of the Serpents, known for his habit of traveling with a variety of pet snakes coiled about his person and belongings. No caches of money have yet been found around or under the inn, which has several large, modern storage cellars.

In the past, these ex-Redmark guests tried several times to seize bags of coins legitimately made by the inn during its daily operations when staff members took the coins to Treskeden House to order future shipments of vegetables or to Velarstown Silver and Jewelry for exchange into gems and trade bars. The leader of the inn staff, Stablemaster Alark Phlamtryn, has hired the Stormblades adventuring band (out of Tsurlagol) to guard the inn staff against searcher harassment. Dzanthea Erosko, the middle-aged chief chambermaid of the staff, is said locally to have recently purchased a live monster to guard the inn strongroom.



## The Fall of Stars

Adventurers' Club, Rooming House, Restaurant, and Tavern

SE BRAR

This famous adventurers' club serves its members as rooming house, restaurant, and tavern. (Rooms are 2 cp per night and can sleep up to four in comfort; all meals are 5 sp and all drinks 3 cp.) It is known for having an atmosphere of rowdy good fun. Pranks involving weapons and monsters are now banned after several regrettably fatal accidents, but the Fall is still not a relaxing place to visit unless a member uses the Mercy Door into the Rest Wing intended for the use of wounded and exhausted members. Membership in the Stellar Fellowship of Gentle Adventurers costs 50 gp annually, and late fees are an additional 5 gp per month. Members who let their payments lapse for more than two seasons must pay in full or be stricken off the rolls and never allowed to join again; the old trick of paying just 50 gp for a "new membership" again is no longer tolerated.

Each member may bring two guests at a time into the club so long as the member is also present. Proof of membership is determined by a secret symbol devised by the member upon joining. If there is any doubt at the doors about a being's membership (dopplegangers and mage impersonators have been a problem in the past), she or he is asked by the wardens to draw the symbol again. The drawing is then compared to the symbol drawn on the rolls by the member at his or her time of joining. The door wardens are two halfogre guards assisted by thieves who carry a

caged magebane<sup>3</sup> and hand crossbows whose bolts are sleep-poison venomed.

#### The Place

The club looks like the row of quietly luxurious old houses it once was. The houses still stand but have been joined together by a huge feasting hall that occupies the space that used to be their stables, coach houses, yards, and alleys.

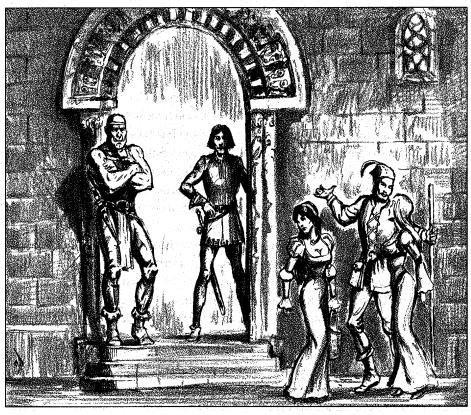
Only two doors of this row of manor houses—both end ones on the west side of Dendever Street—are customarily used and left open. The others are locked but can freely be opened from inside. These two primary doors are the Grand Door and the Slink Door (named for their usual uses) of the club. The other entrances are the Coach Gate off Stink Alley, which is used by those employing closed coaches to arrive or leave in anonymity and by tradesmen and servants, and the Mercy Door on Moonside Lane, where hurt members are brought in.

### The Prospect

Wounded adventurers who have had the forethought to join the Stellar Fellowship may find this club to be a timely gods-send and a shrewd investment: The Fellowship's stock of potions, antidotes, and medicines is dispensed freely to injured members in need, as are the services of Yhalandara Briiostan, a priestess of Tymora affiliated with the Lady of Good Fortune temple, when she is present. (Yhalandara enjoys an ample retainer from the club, so she is often present.) She is an expert at identifying afflictions by their symptoms, and has seen many adventures of her own. The fearful can even purchase potions of heal-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Magebane statistics are found in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume One.





ing and elixirs of health at a bargain price of, respectively, 150 gp or 300 gp each, or 10% off from that if four or more of a kind are bought at once. (This offer open to members only.)

Guests not in such dire need can enjoy the famed social opportunities of the club: meeting fellow adventurers, talking business, the hearing the latest rumors, and exploring hiring possibilities. (Many wealthy patrons are brought to the club as the guest of a member to recruit other members for a job.) Members also can enjoy the nightly feasts, partake of light meals available at all hours, participate in well-lubricated tall-tale sessions and singalongs, take classes in the use of exotic weapons and in battling rare beasts, and revel in the general fun-loving atmosphere of the club. Gray-haired old warriors dancing about in ridiculous

costumes while singing bawdy songs and the almost-nightly dagger toss at the overhead candlewheel candles are both featured events.

Guests who truly need to sleep or recuperate are strongly advised to retire to the Rest Wing. The club staff-notably the beautiful half-elven Lady Lassitress, a petite and graceful sorceress of no small accomplishments and her weretiger assistant Thorthin-take a very dim view of revelry and goings-on in that part of their establishment and enforce the peace there by instant physical means. This forceful stance has proved critically necessary on more than one occasion: Adventurers tend to be folk with strong egos and long memories who nurse feuds and rivalries, and the club's festivities have provided cover for several sickminded murderers.



Most members, however, are retired or semiretired. To them, the club is a pleasant place to drink and chat and enjoy the free entertainment provided by younger, more energetic members charging in with their exciting tales of what is happening out in the world right now. The senior members can then join in if asked, sponsor younglings if they have the coins and the inclination, tutor the precocious in magic and weapons play, and generally feel as if they are still in the thick of things. Besides, the Fall is probably the only place in Harrowdale where one can get real dragonsblood whiskey.

#### The Provender

It has been said one can get anything pourable at the Fall, and that is probably true. Elverquisst, dragonsblood whiskey, and other exotic beverages may be the things most consumed here, but the place serves hearty meals no matter what the hour. These meals are of the whole-roastboar or still-kicking-stag variety and are enlivened by as much exotic stuff as club members who are hunters can bring in. (The notation on the menu "Snow troll livers-they grow in you!" is probably a joke, however.) The club staff members pay well for wyvern tails and other exotic culinary prizes if they are brought in while still not too ripe for heavy sauce to hide.

Among the exotic stuff served up by the kitchens is the food most members really value: rib-sticking, hearty pot meals<sup>4</sup> the like of which they dream of getting while on the trail, and rarely—of any quality, at least—do. Most nights one recipe many members bellow for is Boar and Chestnut Deep Pot (the

recipe for which was covertly acquired by the persuasive charms of your diligent servant! and is recorded on the next page.)

#### The Prices

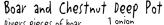
Folk who are not members and show up at the door are not allowed into the club proper but directed to the House Around the Corner, a hostelry on Moonside Lane run by the club as a service to guests brought by a member who number in excess of the two allowed in (a common problem when members join large adventuring bands). The House offers rooms for 14 sp per head, including all the food one can eat but no drinks beyond mintwater. (The food comes from the Fall's kitchen, though that is a fact seldom made known.) Stabling is an extra 1 sp per night per beast.

I have already noted the bargain prices members enjoy Two additional club services they can take advantage of are errandrunning (small items or messages) around town or to Ordulin, Blackfeather Bridge, Feather Falls, Scardale town, or Essembra for 5 gp per trip and forays by a doppleganger club staffer impersonating the member in a desired journey or act. This last service costs 25 gp per night or action and can only be requested by the member to be impersonated to keep pranks and fraud to a minimum. (The doppleganger cannot be hired to assassinate, abduct, or seduce anyone nor place itself in a situation of likely or sure mortal danger, such as a duel.) These fees are cumulative, so 30 gp buys a member an impostor who will make a trip to one of the five locales listed above in their likeness and do something small but specific there (posting a notice or deliv-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Ye would say casseroles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster: Gods! Don't cooks even have any standards left? Seduction by Volo? 'Tis enough to turn my stomach. (Sigh.)





Divers pieces of boar meat, enough to fill a greatpot (they may be well past prime) 1 handful of ground black pepper

1 pour Thurann's oil<sup>b</sup> 4 pours dry cider 4 pours beef stock 1 handful parsley

1 clove garlic

1 handful flour

1 handful of salt
1 pour mushroom juice
(crush or boil field
mushrooms to gain this

Herbs to taste 2 handfuls chestnuts

if ye have it not on hand)

Slice the onion fyne, crush the garlic, peel the chestnuts, and cut the boar into cubes (all separately). In a greatpot over a goodly flame, heat the Thurann's oil, and when it begin to smell hot, put in the boar, a little at a tyme, and stir about, frying until browned all over.

Ladle out the boar and set it aside, tossing in thy onion and garlic instead, and set the greatpot to the edge of the fire where the heat be lower. Fry gently until these hot greens be soft but not changed in hue, and then add the boar back in, stirring in the flour straightaway.

Cook, stirring constantly, for the space of a short song before pouring in the cider, the the mush-room juice, and then the stock, stirring all the while. Bring all slowly to a boil, then add the herbs, salt, and pepper, seasoning to taste.

Cover the greatpot and set it well over the fire to cook for two hours or until the boar be tender. Just before ye judge 'tis done, toss in the chestnuts, and stir. When the boar be truly done, season more to taste if needed, sprinkle with parsley, and ladle into bowls for serving.

ering a message, say). Such requests, when prepaid, have been honored posthumously In this way, stricken or dead adventurers have appeared to friends or neighbors after death or when known to lie near death and so acquired an awesome reputation.

### Travelers' Lore

The Fall of Stars was founded in Harrowdale by the notorious Lady of the Lash, the adventuress Ambreeauta Nenthyn (a worshiper of Loviatar), upon her retirement home to die. Stricken by a wasting disease, Ambreeauta clung to life for two decades and saw her dream of a club where shunned adventurers could

stay in comfort, respected and waited upon, become reality. In undeath, Arnbreeauta still directs the policy and investments of the Fall. (She deftly handled recent and ticklish negotiations with the Burghers and the watch.) She exists now as a floating, talking skull and keeps to inner rooms of the club, a secret to all but a few senior members<sup>8</sup> and the present Mistress of Stars (club director), her beautiful daughter Breeandra.

Lady Breeandra Nenthyn is also a follower of Loviatar and is said to have a private sacred chamber hidden under the club. She is often seen wearing barbed gowns with whips at her belt, yet her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: In the Dales, Thurann's oil is a clear vegetable oil derived by a boiling process invented in Deepingdale long ago invented by a merchant named—surprise—Thurann.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster: To ye, this colloquial measure means one or two minutes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Elminster: Not any more, ye dolt! (Sigh again.)



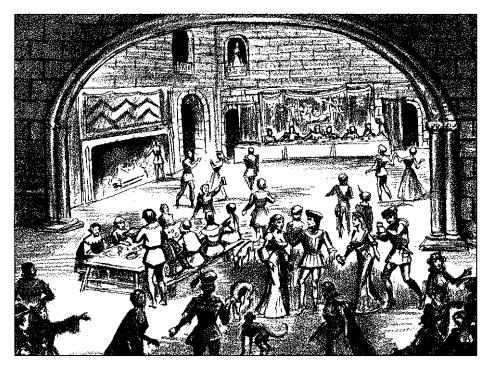
veneration of pain does not extend to mistreating members. To them she is a regal, caring, sisterly helpmate and friend, offering advice and support whenever asked and ensuring that wounds and problems members do not want to reveal are discreetly brought out and dealt with.

Breeandra shares her mother's dream of a home for adventurers and has augmented it with a vision of her own: a large, beautiful country estate linked to the club by tunnels or a gate for old adventurers to retire to, when they are too old to go on. This estate would be a place where kindly staff would indulge the retirees wild tales and feeble attempts at weapons practice and danger-seeking and give them attention as well as needed care.

Breeandra greets most arriving members with proffered drinks and

backrubs, not merely kind words and is often on her feet from dusk to dusk. Under her tireless care, the Fall of Stars has grown to some 800 active (that is, paid up and still believed to be alive) members, including minotaurs, orcs, mongrelmen, an individual who seems to be a werebeholder(!), and a drow priestess who has embraced the Way of the Whip and often visits with Breeandra to commiserate.

The fame of the Fall has spread to such distant lands as Nimbral, Lantan, Icewind Dale, and the Tashalar—and adventurers have begun to make pilgrimages there to see the place for themselves, and thereby (in many cases) gain a refuge in their perilous, lonely lives. To them, the Fall and its staff provide a place where they feel they belong and people who care





about them. To reinforce and preserve this sense of belonging, many members have prepaid their memberships for decades and brought in monster trophies to adorn the walls of the club. These trophies show all who come to the club that, say, Harandil Thundersword is a member and slew this black dragon at that locale on a certain day, or that Selazzar Bloodhawk flourishes still and with his spells destroyed the nameless creature that tore apart prey in the crumbling halls of Myth Drannor with these talons. Such relics are everywhere around the Fall of Stars-and not a few of them hide keys or graven passwords or even bear enchantments allowing members to teleport to them in times of need or when contingency spells function,

These hidden items, transport enchantments, and other perils attendant to having adventurers as members have led Breeandra to hire some quite powerful wizards and priests, who for various reasons want to withdraw from the world (often in disguise), as staff members. They mingle with members and guests with combat and defensive spells always at the ready. The undead Ambreeauta keeps constant watch throughout the club by means of an array of scrying magical items, so staff members always arrive on the run without having to be summoned whenever someone - or something - gates in or is released from an item.

Shielding and fire-prevention magics lie layers deep in most corners of the club, so

detection spells tend to be useless within its walls. This side-effect has undoubtedly concealed some things from the overly inquisitive, and the roster of still-missing items is rumored to include not only the bodies of several missing members but some rich treasures, such as a palm-sized glass globe filled with various pearls of power and the Tears of the Weeping Maiden, which were stolen from the vaults of the gem merchant family of Irrii some 20 winters ago. Members who attempt to pry, dig, or cut into the walls, floors, or ceilings are politely told by staff members that folk who persist in such activity will suffer the same fate that befell the few brave men sent by Lashan who managed to penetrate the club's (unspecified) defenses: Everything they set weapon or tool to spat magic missile spells at them. How Ambreeauta achieved this magical field of peril remains a mystery. Some say she hired the Simbul to cast it as a custom one-time defense, and others insist the spell field came from ruined Myth Drannor in a grimoire and can be reset or even resets itself!

Mention must be made of the famous Challenge of Orytar to all Stellar Fellowship members: bring to the Fall of Stars an eye of Aurgloroasa, a dragon lairing the Thunder Peaks. Aurgloroasa is gigantic female elder wyrm shadow dragon, who is rumored to have mastered magic enough to defeat many an archmage. Orytar died on his fifth attempt to accomplish this feat, and his challenge has since caused the deaths of many members.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>The Tears of the Weeping Maiden is the masterwork of the Irrii. (pronounced "EAR-ah-ee") family; it has been added to by each master jeweler of the family down the generations. It is an elaborate pectoral necklace of a great many (accounts of the number of stones vary) diamonds strung together with precious wire. The low front fringe of the necklace consists of a raked array of teardrop-shaped, brilliant-cut diamonds of unusually large size. These unique stones (one is at least as long as a tall man's middle finger) may be worth 75,000 gp or more apiece. The entire assembly, if intact, may be worth as much as 2,400,000 gp.



## Halvan's Keep

Halvan the Dark is infamous among the Fair Folk as the man who sought to carve a road—Halfaxe Trail—through the heart of the oldest, deepest shadowdark stands in all the Elven Court woods and was prepared to bring about the deaths of elves and humans in plenty to do it. He found his own death in his efforts, and when word of this came at last to Harrowdale town, Halvan's servants fled his keep only a few running paces ahead of Halvan's foes, who rose from their shops and houses to go to the Keep and despoil it.

Halvan's abrasive ways had made him many foes and also made him very rich (or so folk in town believed, anyway), since he seized the assets of debtors he had lent funds to who could not repay him. A lot of folk came looking for the gold coins that were said to fill entire rooms of his Keep, as well as looking for gem-encrusted suits of armor and other riches. (Halvan had a weakness for ornate armors; he had several suits made for himself as the years wound on and he grew fatter and his tastes more opulent.)

The looters did do a lot of damage to various expensive pieces of furniture and emptied Halvan's kitchens, pantries, library, and grand rooms of just about everything useful and portable. Treasure was not, however, found anywhere, even after certain of the more enthusiastic searchers took to breaking into walls. As the anger of the townsfolk grew, the destruction grew with it until several stout local merchants were killed when a wall they were busily chipping away at

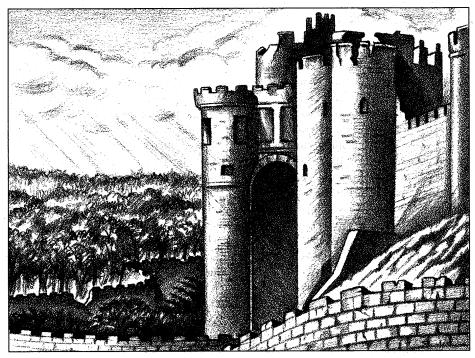
fell on them. The local watch, the only vestige of authority remaining in Harrowdale, then ordered all exploration and vandalism of the Keep—which is an old, rambling, largely neglected manor house enclosed within a newer and more impressive set of fortified walls—be ceased forthwith.

When the Council of Seven Burghers came to power, it upheld that decree and set fines (of 50 gp per head) to be levied against all persons seen entering or departing from the Keep. The fines, which still stand, instantly dampened the enthusiasm of fat local merchants for tearing down walls, but did little to deter bold outlander adventurers.

It is thought that some 30 summers ago one of those adventurers set free some sort of fell guardian creature that Halvan had set to watch over his treasury and perished in the battle that ensued. A struggle ensued, it is surmised from the odd noises heard by people out that night, and the struggle started a fire that raged through the Keep, leaving it a blackened, roofless ruin. In the face of talk of lumps of halfmelted gold larger than street carts being uncovered, the watch was sent in when the smoke had cleared to see if the fire had revealed anything of value. They found only several empty hithertosecret chambers and many bones-of brigands who had slain each other, outlaws who had hidden in the Keep over the years, and the like.

The flames did reveal a new way down into the dungeons, but forays found only wraiths within it, bolstering local legends that Halvan's ghost guarded his Keep. (The wraiths were probably the undead remains of victims Halvan had chained





up in his cells and forgotten.) Halvan's treasury, if it does still exist, has never been found.

New rumors about the haunted Keep still surface in Harrowdale. Honest citizens avoid the burnt-out shell in their midst, but more than one shady organization has used the shunned Keep as a base over the years, from followers of Loviatar to a smuggling cabal. The vigilance of the watch has uncovered all such uses after a time, and adventurers were then hired to clean the place out.

It seems likely that a call to interested folk of action will soon go out again, as monsters are appearing in the streets of Harrowdale by night—monsters coming, witnesses swear, from the Keep. Those creatures spotted are known to have included minotaurs, feyrs, mimics, lurkers above, kobolds, mongrelmen, trolls,

giant centipedes, and even displacer beasts. Wise locals fear that evil interests have imported a deepspawn (or created a *gate* or other source of deadly creatures) in the heart of the ruins for their own fell purposes — but what those purposes are, and who is responsible, remains a mystery at this time.

Interested travelers are advised that the Company of the Werebat, working out of Melvaunt, recently fled Harrowdale after seven of their number (out of 11) perished in Halvan's Keep. Their grim report, tendered so the Council would allow them to keep the deposit paid to them, recorded a few unsprung traps and at least one still-unexplored network of hidden passages in the Keep's gutted upper levels, but said the cellars were literally crawling with beasts, including at least one beholder!



## Velarsburg

Standing on the western edge of the Velarwood between two arms of that old and thickly grown forest, Velarsburg is the market town for the farmers of northern Harrowdale and the center of the busy Harran logging and carpentry trades. Velarsburg began as a cluster of farmers and foresters' huts around the Velar Mill, a horse-powered sawmill run by Haemar the Old. The mill still stands, but it is now just a lumber warehouse. When Haemar died a few winters ago after almost 80 summers as miller, more than 20,000 gold coins were discovered sewn into grain sacks in the attic of the mill. The origins of this treasure are still a matter of much colorful local speculation, but Haemar is known to have been an adventurer in his youth.

The Velarwood has always been a fell place in Harran legend, home to cloakers, trolls, stirges, and bonebats. A community of moon-worshiping lycanthropes was said to dwell in caves at the heart of the wood where the Howling Hill rises out of the trees. They may still do so; few woodcutters dare go far into the forest.

Drow and a few half-elves are known to gather in a glade at the north end of the Velarwood from time to time to venerate Eilistraee the Dark Maiden. Harran fireside tales speak not only of their beautiful, mysterious, half-seen dancing—but of the enchanted silver swords they make and use to slay bears, deer, boars, and other woodland creatures. Harran legends say these swords and their kills are buried together as part of each ritual of worship, but the legend-layered telling of such tales is difficult to judge the truth of.

Folk in Velarsburg are almost proud to know that such wild, fey things go on

around them. The Harrans here live close, to the land and feel themselves part of an ancient cycle that is splendid and savage and which will outlive such momentary human things as the rise and fall of Lashan, the wealth of Sembia, or the terrors of Zhentil Keep. This is rich territory for the faiths of Malar, Chauntea, and the woodland gods. Roughly 250 folk dwell in Velarsburg and another 300 or so come to its market every tenday or venture into it more often on business. Despite its small size, it is considered a town by the locals—and a visitor would do well not to contest them on the subject.

#### Landmarks

Velarsburg is small and rustic, with orchards providing shade around cottages that nestle amid wildflower gardens. Around the edges of the settlement sit the various logging compounds with their mounds of sawdust and stacked spars, noisy cutting shops, and isolated warehouses. To cut down on the risk of fire, such storage places must be surrounded by earthen walls higher than they are to catch sparks. Only vines or flowers can be planted on these mounds, so melons are grown in profusion in Velarsburg.

At the heart of town is the huge, muddy market ground with its many wells and horse troughs. Harrow Ride, the road that ultimately becomes Halfaxe Trail, comes in from Harrowdale town and splits into a huge ring to enclose the market. At one of these intersections stands the local temple of Chauntea and at the other is Velarsburg's only inn. The other important local businesses plus the rooming houses that provide homes for the loggers who dwell here in summer and fall cluster around the ring. A traveler can walk from end to



end of Velarsburg in a very short time, but to enjoy the flowers, the views, and the stunted old trees climbed all over by local children takes much longer.

### Places of Interest in Velarsburg

#### Temple

The Temple of the Harvest Moon

This square, impressive building is entered through a massive round stone tower, which is the remains of a baronial keep from before there were Dales. (Some say it was the home of King Flymder, but others say it was the hold of Hantras Wolthead, a pirate who dealt stolen goods to the elves and so was allowed to dwell here when the Fair Folk kept other humans away.) Known as the Moon Tower, this keep's walls end in jagged spurs where the top floor was torn away long ago by an angry dragon (or so local lore attests). In the center of the circle formed by of these spurs temple clergy members have set up a gigantic copper moon treated with everbright magics and amber continual faerie fire radiances. At night, this moon is a beacon visible miles off.

Beyond the tower, the temple forms a hollow square that encloses a courtyard given over to cultivation—or, as some not of the faith wryly put it, providing space for "stacking up all the coins that come in." While this is a cynical view of the temple's intent, this holy house is undeniably a rich and important temple of Chauntea. Its high priestess, High Mother Harvestmistress Yvonna Oakenstave, a cleric of long service and impressive accomplishments, leads 20-odd priests and priestesses, who are guarded by the same number of temple warriors.

This temple has a hushed, peaceful atmosphere, and even the guards speak

softly. The clergy members spend little time in prayer. If they are not gardening in the temple, its courtyard, or temple-owned fields, they are out assisting farmers and needy folk up and down the Dale, avoiding only the wild seashore and Harrowdale town itself. Many lost travelers have been fed and guided for free by helpful priests of the Earthmother. Even pilgrims of other faiths are served in this way.

The hard work of the clergy members on repairing farm fences and irrigating, planting, and clearing farm fields of weeds is reflected in the love Harran farmers have for them. Many heartfelt, substantial donations are made to the temple, and thus far at least, the high mother has diligently used the moneys to rebuild roads and bridges, to improve irrigation, and to work with foresters, farmers, and forest elves alike to keep everyone dwelling in harmony and the land eternally renewed rather than damaged through deforestation or overplanting.

Visitors to the temple are healed, fed, and guarded without charge or obligation. All save the sick sleep on the ground under the sky in reverence to Chauntea (including the priests), though tents and such are used in inclement weather and everyone sleeps inside in crowded shelter from the first snows until the spring comes. Those who stay for more than a night are expected to help with the gardening in and around the holy house.

# **Shops Black Stars Logging**Sawmill and Lumber Yard

8 8 8

Black Stars is the collective logging mill and yard owned by every woodcutter in



town who is not a Torsyld. Each logger and carver here works with only a few sorts of wood that they specialize in learning the tricks of harvesting, cutting, and seasoning the timber of. The yard also works with affiliated furnituremakers who work from home shops and display their wares here or request Black Stars wood to be shipped to them. Many a fine table, chest, or chair can be found throughout the Dragon Reach lands with the burned-in brand of the arc of three black stars on it to show that its lumber once came from this bustling yard.

## **Torsyld Logging** *Lumber Yard*

**888** 

This large, prosperous compound is devoted entirely to shadowtop wood. The Torsyld family, like all the loggers of Velarsburg, specializes in what type of wood it deals in. Family members bring in only the best wood for stripping, polishing, and the insertion of splines of other woods to keep the spars flexible for use as masts. In my opinion, the Torsylds run a well-kept yard and business.

## **Trader Fine Furs** *Furrier*

5 5 5 5

One of the largest furriers in the Dales, this old family firm is having to specialize in the exotic to compete with smaller local firms in Cormyr and Sembia. It is now a place that hires many adventuring bands to slay specific monsters in the depths of the Elven Court woods in ways—such as with *lightning bolt* spells—that keep the pelts as undamaged as possible.

#### Tavern

The Pushy Pixie

!! OO

This ridiculously named place is where farmers and foresters go to drink and be entertained by crude pranks, ruder dancing, thigh-slapping lowbrow jokes, and rough-and-tumble fights every few breaths. It is a good thing the town's industry is furnituremaking: More stools and tables get broken in here every night than a rough Sembian tavern might go through in a year! The tavern opens a few hours after highsun, and two priests from the Harvest Moon are stationed here every evening to repair the worst of the wounded.

Happily, visitors are welcomed rather than ridiculed or picked on by drunks looking to start a brawl. The dancers cannot really dance, and once a month when the Flametresses, a traveling band of priestesses of Sune who *can* dance, come through town, the Pixie is packed full of locals there to enjoy the show. The prices are low, the ale is good, and the Pixie does not pretend to be refined or special—a nice rustic alehouse.

#### INN The Old Stump

ini bush

The Old Stump is expensive—after all, few folk come to town to stay the night except outlanders buying furniture—but surprisingly *very* good. I wonder how it stays in business, since most local farmers traveling through just lie down atop their coins and sleep in their wagons. However, I recommend the Stump if you like an atmosphere like home with good cooking and warm, caring comforts.







# The High Dale



nless this high, cold farming backland lies along one's route of travel, wayfarers have little reason to come to the High Dale. Set

apart from the other Dales by the Thunder Peaks that wall it in, the High Dale is really just a high but earthen-floored mountain pass offering a route between Cormyr and Sembia along the Thunder Way (a wagon track which passes from Saerb at one end to Thunderstone in Cormyr at the other). One of the oldest Dales, this tiny holding is insular and likes it that way. The cosmopolitan airs, intrigue, and strife of other places are not for Highdalesmen. They enjoy quiet, simple, hardy lives as shepherds, with a few of them pursuing weaving and stonecutting. They also make a few coins off the wagons that choose this way through the mountains rather than the main road that runs through Daerlun to the south or the East Way that cuts through Thunder Pass to the north.

## The Countryside

The road up into the High Dale climbs swiftly at either end, although it always traverses earth and not rock unlike Thunder Pass. Mountains wall in the Dale to the north and south. They are scaled by dangerous-looking tracks that ascend to terraces and high pastures carved out by the Highdalesmen over the seven centuries or so that men have dwelt here; blasting magic has obviously been used to make or improve them in several places.

Many small streams plunge down from the sheer rock faces around the Dale. They drain away in either direction from the head of the pass at the town of High-castle, seat of the six-strong Dale council and home to 350 Highdalesmen. Approximately a thousand folk live in all the rest of the High Dale, from the guardpost of Westkeep on the Cormyrean end of the pass to the guardpost of Eastkeep on the Sembian side.

The casual traveler may miss the most famous site in the High Dale: the Dancing Place, said to be where many gods met to form alliances and make agreements when the world was young (see the Dancing Place entry, hereafter). It is easy to miss because it is in a hidden side-valley just east of Highcastle on the north side of the Dale. Aside from the one that cradles the Dancing Place, two other such valleys nestle in the mountains, They are small clefts between mountain spurs that open into the main pass but swiftly hook around to parallel it until they narrow to a close less than a mile from their mouths.

Both of the other two hidden valleys are on the south side of the pass. One, just east of Westkeep, is called Copper Gulp. Many copper delves, both working and abandoned, riddle its walls. The presence of this metal has made the water in the small lake in this vale look a truly beautiful blue-green. But beware: It is also poisonous to drink.

The other hidden vale is called, well, Hidden Vale and lies just to the south of Twoswords Bridge where the Thunder Way crosses Baerast's Stream, the rivulet



that empties eastward out of the pass. Hidden Vale is home to several gnome and halfling farms. They guard their domain against prospectors and more casual intruders by means of a few trained giant spiders—horrible hairy things that are about the size of a small cottage! Highdalesmen ignore the things and just stroll in to visit their friends, but the arachnids scare a lot of peddlers and would-be thieves away.

Many rare herbs and flowers whose petals and juices are valuable as ingredients in medicines and magical inks and preparations grow in all three side-valleys, though the main Dale has been largely picked clear. This Dale is one place where children who are not afraid of heights or perilous rock-scrambles can make a lot of money picking things others cannot reach. Alchemists from Sembia come up here on an almost monthly basis during the growing season and sometimes in winter (to gain the rare moonflower, which grows only atop deep snow) to purchase plants that the locals have painstakingly sought out and collected.

Terrain that allows wagons to pass through mountains is always of strategic importance, and the High Dale is no exception. On several occasions both Cormyr and Sembia have attempted to take over the High Dale-and Archendale even sent an army to stake its claim to it oncebut no external power has ever been able to hold it for more than a few months. (The Zhentarim held it for the longest period of any invader during the Time of Troubles, attacking from Daggerdale by means of a magical gate.) On a recent occasion, the wizard Yandrin Thorl, a resident of the High Dale, warned Archendale, Cormyr, and Sembia to abandon all

thoughts of taking over the Dale unless they wanted large settled areas in their respective lands destroyed by fire. He claimed he had developed a means of combining the effects of *meteor swarm* spells so that they could be cast at various times but would not take effect until later when a single word of activation was uttered—then they would all ignite in a spot of his choosing. Various mages scoffed at Yandrin's warning, so he demonstrated his power by reducing an island in the Sea of Fallen Stars to blackened ruin. Everyone has been content to leave the High Dale alone since then.

### The Highdalesmen

The folk of the High Dale, whatever their gender, are known as Highdalesmen. They are a hardy, good-humored lot who are used to baking heat reflected off the mountainsides during summer and icy gales in winter. They have little use for ceremony or grand airs, and as a result their rulers are the most likely of all Dale rulers to do as most folk wish, rather than scheming on their own behalf or thinking that they know better than their people.

The High Dale is ruled by six elected councilors who each serve for six years with one seat elected each year. These six in turn select a seventh, the high constable of the Dale, who serves as the council chairperson. The current High Constable is the tremendously popular ranger and ex-adventurer Irreph Mulmar. Officially, he votes to break ties in council and trains and leads six constables who in turn muster the militia, but in truth he runs the Dale.



## The Dancing Place

This sacred site is a round, bare hilltop of vibrant, soft, green moss surrounded by a ring of duskwood trees and a brook that plunges down the mountainsides to nearly encircle the duskwood stand before running into a small, placid lake. The entire hushed, hidden valley that holds the Dancing Place<sup>1</sup> is stunningly beautiful and has a feeling of deep, patient peacefulness.

The Dancing Place is named for its onetime use by a long-vanished korred community. It is famous for a divine assembly that befell in the Year of the Dawn Rose (720 DR), when-four days before Midsummer-the elves called the clergies of many sylvan faiths to gather at a grove sacred to Silvanus on this hilltop for a parley. Elminster proposed the founding of the Harpers to that assembly-and when some of the clergy rejected the idea, their deities manifested to speak through them in support of the idea. That meeting gave the Harpers and the Dancing Place certain special powers and led to the human settlement of the High Dale. The "High Harp" badge of the High Dale recalls this gathering.

Pilgrims of those faiths who met here on that day long ago come here to this day to be touched by the same awe as those present at the assembly felt. The faiths who hold the Dancing Place important are those of: Deneir, Eldath, Lliira, Mielikki, Milil, Mystra, Oghma, Selûne, Silvanus, and Tymora of the humans and Corellon Larethian, Sehanine Moonbow, Fenmarel Mestarine, Hanali Celanil, Labelas Enoreth, and Solonor Thelandira of the elves. The folk of the High Dale have

set aside special wooded encampments along the northern side of the Dale around the trail that leads to the Dancing Place for the use of the "Gentle Ones" (pilgrims of the above faiths) coming to visit the holy valley.

The location of an elven holy site in the High Dale means that Highdalesmen are very likely to encounter elves rather more frequently that some people of the Dragon Reach lands. The Highdalesmen hold elves in awe and respect them, regarding them as superior folk who should be left alone as much as possible but greeted with gentle friendship when meetings occur. One Dale hunter told me that he estimates 6.000 or more elven folk and twice that number of half-elves steal into the High Dale every year to visit the holy valley and just as quietly steal away again. (None of the High Dale hunters slay anything in the valley of the Dancing Place, by the way-nor should any visitor.)

Today, the Dancing Place is tended as a gigantic, hallowed garden by priests and priestesses of Oghma, Mystra, Mielikki, Silvanus, and Selûne. They work together and submit to the orders of one Watcher chosen from among their ranks. Since the death of Oram Tree-Father of the faith of Silvanus, the holy folk of the Dancing Place have been led by Learned Father Loremaster High Crandan Ethander, chief of the Oghmanyte clergy members here. The priests not only maintain and defend the valley, but also aid all heroes of good heart in their activities as well as providing free spells, healing, and shelter to all druids, bards, and rangers. The Harpers run messages between the holy folk here and their fellow clergy in the world outside-and can rouse the militia in Highcastle and

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$ The location of the Dancing Place is shown on the first map in the section on Highcastle later in this chapter.



have them here inside an hour if swords are needed to quell any trouble or fires must be fought.

Violent trouble and catastrophes do happen from time to time: Goblinkin boil down out of the mountain caverns from time to time or deliberately start avalanches, and adventurers sometimes come hoping to wrest some of the fabled magic of the place away from the priests, since many tales speak not of the holiness of the valley, but of magic locked in items and books that are physically guarded by the priests of Silvanus. I was firmly told that such tales are false. The magic of the Dancing Place resides in the spells of those who come there and in powers granted by the gathered gods to the place itself, not in tomes or items.

These powers manifest as follows: A night of slumber on the ground in the open on the moss of the Dancing Place, can heal a being of all wounds, sickness, and madness, and ends all curses (such as lycanthropy) and geas spells or other witbinding enchantments. The magic of the site holds good for all woodland creatures from pixies to owlbears and extends to faithful worshipers of the deities I listed earlier. However, this divine boon always carries a price: The aided being awakens with a clear mission or task, set by the gods, in his or her mind and is unable to ignore or neglect the task for long. (It will gradually become an obsession that rules the being if ignored.)

Clergy of the deities listed above who sleep anywhere in the valley often receive guidance in the form of dream visions and sometimes are sent answers to specific questions. Those who bear a magical item of unknown or partially known powers and sleep holding or wearing it usually find upon awakening that every detail of its workings has been set in their minds, akin to the action of an exhaustive *identify* spell without its draining effects, without any conscious action on their part.

All clergy of the above-listed faiths who are within the valley can once a day cast a call lightning and a flame strike at will without having to pray for it. (This ability is sort of an extra spell granted by the gods.) As misusing such a boon would be sinful, this power is rarely called upon save when the Dancing Place is under direct attack. In the most recent instance of this ability's use, the followers of Talos had sent a band of ruffians into the High Dale with orders to torch the site; they were slain to a man by the holy defenders.

I'm told that the Dancing Place has other holy powers, too, but I was unable to get anyone to tell me what these were. Instead, I was told it would be best if no mention of the holy site was made in this or any other travelers' guidebook—a suggestion I was duty-bound to ignore, of course!<sup>2</sup>

By treaty, the Harpers watch over the High Dale but base no agents there, instead maintaining hidden caches of food, equipment, *potions of healing*, and other magic in the mountains around the Dale for the use of their members when passing through. Most such Harpers camp on the high ledges or visit with farmers who are personal friends rather than showing themselves in Highcastle. Cynics believe the treaty exists solely because the mountain pass is of strategic importance, but the truth is, it was signed because of the Dancing Place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: Of course. Sigh.





The same treaty obligates Cormyr to set a war wizard on constant watch over the High Dale—something that the security of that fair realm, given Sembia's wealth and endless appetite for expansion, would demand today anyway. Cormyr is also obligated to defend the High Dale in time of war. During the Time of Troubles, Cormyr had already sent agents—who were slaughtered by the Zhents—to investigate reports that a cruel new lord had risen to rule the High Dale before Elminster, Sharantyr of the Knights of Myth Drannor, and the Harpers together defeated the Zhents.<sup>3</sup>

Some time ago, a Highdalesman by the name of Dorn Talattar, a silversmith who dwells near Eastkeep, discovered a rich vein of silver in Manymists Mountain, the peak that encloses the hidden valley of the Dancing Place on its east side. He mined the vein in secret for years, digging along its narrow deposit alone and creating a narrow, man-high tunnel in the process—a tunnel that recently broke through into the vale that holds the Dancing Place!

Dorn wants to explore the far side of the valley in hopes he can find the silver vein continuing on, but he is opposed by the priests, who say that "Dorn's Way" has already endangered the sanctity of the valley by offering another easy way into it from the High Dale. Who knows what disasters might be unleashed if Dorn's mining breaks through into Underdark caverns or an underground river? At present, Dorn is forbidden to enter the valley, but this matter is not settled and strong feelings persist on both sides.

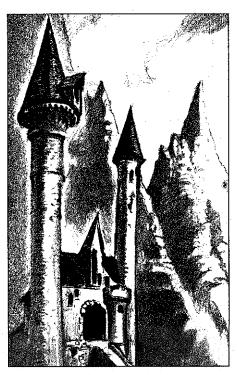
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>As told in the novel *Shadows of Doom* by Ed Greenwood (TSR, Inc., 1995).



## Highcastle

The only town in the High Dale is this settlement of 350 or so folk at the summit of the pass. Its stout stone buildings with roofs of slate, steeply pitched to shed winter snows, cluster along the few streets. From the mountain terraces one can readily see a spiderweb of lanes converging through the farms to form a central, shield-shaped ring surrounded by the landmarks of the Dale.

The Dale's prominent features have changed quite a bit from what existed before the Time of Troubles. The High Castle has been allowed to fall into ruin, and the houses that clustered about it have been pulled down. The town has receded away from the hill crowned by the castle. The Zhent barracks were also



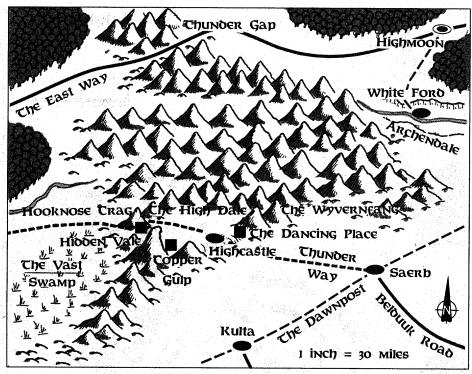
demolished after the Zhents were defeated, and their gate is no more. Farms have reclaimed both areas.

#### Landmarks

The High Castle was once an ancient robber baron's keep. Baron Hurst Amadin, who died over 700 winters ago fighting off orcs, was a fat brigand known-behind his back-as "the Boar" for his manner and brawn. He charged a 6-gp-per-wagon toll plus whatever his strongest warrior could carry out of the wagon in both hands in one trip for passage through High Pass (the presentday High Dale). The High Castle has been used by many masters since, including several "lords" of the Dale, but now lies in ruins again. The council has bandied about plans, however, to fix parts of it up again to house the Dale armory, the stables for the constables, and quarters for the militia and indeed all Dale citizens in times of trouble such as the frequent winter wolf raids, which occur when the mountain snows are at their worst.

A small but quite adequate fortress whose ballistae and catapults can crush any large armed force trying to move through the pass, the High Castle has always suffered from its proximity to the mountains: An enemy who scales Helmturtle Peak to its south can rake the battlements with arrows at will or roll boulders down (catapults are not even be needed) into the heart of the fortress. The Zhentarim found and carried off some treasure caches walled up in the Castle, but local lore maintains that far more gold yet remains to be found, along with an entire wagonload of gems! Local tales also whisper that the cellars of the





castle hold agate to somewhere far away in the Sword Coast lands.<sup>4</sup>

A much newer stronghold on the rising ground just northeast of town faces the castle across the pass. Arrowpoint is the home base of the Pegasus Archery Company, a mercenary band that the High-dalesmen accepted into their lands only after every last warrior among them agreed to allow a spell to be placed on them by Yandrin Thorl that turns any Pegasus woman or man who takes up arms against the Dale or tries to rule in the High Dale to stone.

Arrowpoint consists of a semicircular earthen rampart with wooden watchtowers at its either end. This rampart encloses stables and barracks. Hireswords who come to Arrowpoint seeking employment can expect to earn 4 cp per day plus a blanket, a bunk, and two plain meals of bread or biscuits and cold, cooked fowl or cheese, but these wages can rise to 5 sp per day for those with useful talents. The Pegasus folk are often away from the Dale on assignments for wealthy interests who have hired them to explore and tame the dangerous regions surrounding the Dales so that they can be developed.

Between these two strongholds lies Highcastle, a small town where travelers can readily find all places of interest merely by looking around at each place where two roads meet. Not so easily found is the Dale Councilchamber, which is hidden away

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Actually it connects to Spellgard on the western edge of Anauroch. For how to find it, ye will have to read the novel *Shadows of Doom*. Now that Saharel's gone, I don't suppose ye can do much harm.







#### Highcastle Map Key

- 1. The High Castle (ruin)
- 2. The Swordsmith's House (inn)
- 3. The Shield and Keep (tavern)
- 4. The Dale Councilchamber
- 5. Ironhand's Arms (weaponsmith)
- **6.** Frogfoot's Provisions (caravan and mountaineering goods shop)
- 7. The Eagles' Eyrie (inn)
- **8.** Arrowpoint (home base of Pegasus Archery Company)

down a lane of its own behind trees to the northwest of the built-up area. Around the Councilchamber wraps a pretty little park of old trees, climbing roses, and closetrimmed grass (a luxury in this mountain country). The grand stone pile of Councilchamber Hall faces the visitor in the center of things. The building is a former adventurers' mansion that now houses the Dale offices, granaries, jail, armory, and meeting rooms. Councilchamber Hall is flanked by the watch barracks to the south, and the high constable's manor-a much smaller mansion-to the north. At least half a dozen militiamen are always on guard in this area.

The open space in front of the High Castle was the Dale's market, but carts now usually pull in behind Frogfoot's Provisions in the interior of the roughly shield-shaped ring of roads in the heart of town. Dale farmers sell their potatoes, turnips, hay, wool, mutton, and goats' milk here.

Townsfolk include a few blacksmiths and leatherworkers, a wheelwright and cooper, and several carpenters. No buildings of distinct architectural interest exist in Highcastle, and the town has no temples save a tiny chapel (Battle Chapel) to Tempus.

#### Places of Interest in Highcastle Shops

Frogfoot's Provisions

Caravan and Mountaineering Goods (Adventuring Supplies)

This rambling structure looks like just what it is: three old warehouses that are on the verge of falling down but in the meantime have been joined together to sell things to people out of. Here visitors can find a good array of rations, bottles, hooks, ropes, metal spikes, mallets, tarpaulins, and leather goods—from distinctly unstylish boots to nicely tooled, stout belts that even possess a certain flair. These wares are especially suited for the needs of a caravan merchant or mountain prospector.

The family that owns this business, the Hurlstones, uses a large webbed frog's foot on their signboard so that you can easily find them. The oldest Hurlstone, Urgar, still whittles the reason for this shop's name: crudely charming toy wooden jumping frogs that are for sale at the counter for 1 cp each. One pushes down the tail end of the frog, which is a lever, and it forces the thing to hop.

I found Urgar to be a fascinating source of information about the many old mines in the mountains around the High Dale. He insists that the mines hereabouts were largely abandoned not because the ore was all taken out, but because the monster attacks grew too heavy—and that there are not only rich mines up there standing unused with exposed veins of precious metals gleaming in the walls, but several hidden



valleys. Some of these, he insisted, are inhabited by humans who have little or no contact with the rest of the world! It is tempting to dismiss all this as just one old man's fancies, but I have visited the Vale of Volkumburgh located not so far north of here in the Thunder Peaks and had prospectors who had spent their lives exploring this mountain range there scoff at my tales of the High Dale with its villages and meadows and a valley nearly as long as the Thunder Gap itself.

Interested travelers should seek out Urgar Hurlstone. Bring him a handkeg of Old Smoke, as a gift, and he will give you a day or more of local lore. While talking with me, he named at least three of these hidden hamlets and one lost dwarven city: High Crimmond, Jewelstone Falls, Orcsin's Gate, and Thunderholme (dwarven).

#### Ironhand's Arms

Weaponsmith

This workshop is full of its weaponsmith owner's work: top-quality weapons and tools! Azan Stonesplitter, the dwarven smith and owner, overcharges a trifle, but he makes bladed weapons of the very finest quality. (His prices, which are about 10% higher than average, are not out of line considering this remote location.) Given time enough, Azan can forge swords fit to ride on the hips of kings. Azoun of Cormyr is probably wearing one as you read this. He owns several of Azan's blades and prefers them for everyday use because they heft well and keep a good edge.

Ironhand's is a real find and a surprise in such a small settlement. It is

worth any traveler's time for a look around. A traveling companion of mine left this place with beautifully balanced throwing knives strapped all over her. Her advice: This is *the* place to buy tools and weapons that you want to have as life-long friends. Do *not* miss the sets of matched throwing axes under the east windows!

## Tavern The Shield and Keep

This alehouse well deserves the fame it enjoys in the nearby reaches of both Cormyr and Sembia. In both realms it is sometimes called "the Halfway Tankard" because of its location. Folk in the High Dale really enjoy good minstrelry, and the Shield and Keep always features a bard or the like here in the early afternoon and evening. Worry not, though: It also schedules "talking times" when no performer plays, so that those who want to talk business or just chat can do so without interruption.

The Shield has curtained booths around the walls, old and stout furniture, and a dimly lit "lovers' gallery" overlooking the main taproom floor. A few visiting merchants who like to hear themselves talk sometimes get up on the stage here and deliver the latest news from Cormyr or Sembia in ringing, rolling orator's tones—and the locals love it! The booths each have their own stone fireplace to keep off the chill in winter.

Overall, the Shield is a lively, friendly place that sells hearty drinks and ribsticking viands. Its kitchen serves soup, lamb stews in winter, sausages, and blood pudding. When local hunters



bring an excess in, roast mountain goat, hare, or snow bear are sometimes added to menu. The featured drink is Highwater Ale, which is made with water from the inn's own well. This icy, homebrewed ale is a minty, clear, throatburning beer that is very much an acquired taste. It is not to my knowledge sold outside the Dale.

The keep in this tavern's name, of course, refers to the High Castle, but the shield is an actual old battle relic that hangs above the bar-a battered, fireblackened, almost unrecognizable thing said to have once been borne into the fray in this mountain pass by the elven hero Orndacil "Stormstars" Ereuvyn, who whelmed humans, half-elves, and elves against an orc horde in the early days of human habitation in the Dragon Reach. Though it was badly damaged in the battle (Omdacil died wearing it), the shield is said to still bear a few of its minor enchantments, and the auras I detected bear that tale out.

I tested the only shield power that Highdalesmen claim to recall—that nothing can shatter or crack within 90 feet of Orndacil's Shield—by flinging a wineglass at the stone floor, and it did not break! The tavernkeeper, a fat, friendly fellow named Bedar Duskwood with a wispy, jaw-fringe beard, advised me that testing the shield's powers is considered bad manners because it is so often soon followed by an attempted theft of the relic. So if you visit, you had best take my word on its properties or face the displeasure of the tavern's patrons.

Another tale of treasure is associated with this old tavern, too: The Shield's water comes not from the nearby stream

like most other establishments in town, but from a very deep well. At the bottom of this well are said to lie the gems of an elven princess that were thrown there centuries ago and never recovered. One adventurer magically changed shape into a flying snake in order to descend and search for them, but he never came up again. Locals believe that monsters dwell at the bottom of the well and that their bones give Highwater Ale its strange taste.

#### lnns

The most splendid accommodation in town is the Swordsmith's House, which is notable enough to warrant its own entry (see hereafter). That leaves me but to describe the only other hostelry in Highcastle, the sorry hole known as:

#### The Eagles' Eyrie



The Eagles' Eyrie is dirty and unheated. Cold winds get in through crevices and even gaping holes in the walls and windows. These same holes allow birds, rats, and mice free passage, so expect to share your stay with these fellow creatures. To top it off, the staff members are surly or merely absent for long periods—no doubt they are eating and getting warm at the nearby tavern. The only redeeming quality of the place it that it is relatively cheap. Five pieces of silver buys you a stable stall, a room with beds for three (a fourth can sleep on the floor if she or he does not mind getting walked on all night), a meal of hot bread covered with melted cheese with the color and taste of old candle wax, and water to drink.



#### The Swordsmith's House

Inn

SESS BRAR

This justly popular, first-rate inn closes during the winter for lack of trade, but the owners, a busy halfling family and their hired, long-term human help, spend their closed time building new furnishings and improving the inn. At least one guest room is redone every year, and the quiet luxury of the place just keeps getting better. Call this place "cozy and quiet, with everything done right," and you will not be wrong.

The name of the inn comes from its former owner: Azan Stonesplitter. Azan put it up to give buyers a place to sleep, but he had no interest in running it, and it stayed just that: a cold, empty barn of a place to sleep with cots and a huge fireplace. Guests had to wake up throughout the night to stuff firewood into the hearth from the pile of split and stacked cordwood that filled one half of the main room. For warmth in the cold months, all guests slept around the fire; in summer, they dragged their cots to the windows. More than one likened the inn to a camp pavilion. Azan was only too happy to sell it to the Buckoonwatch halfling family – and their purchase has been every traveler's gain.

#### The Place

As pair of crossed, rusting boar swords as long as most draft horses form an archway that guests pass through to enter the inn. Any rough and rustic image they may foster in the minds of guests is dispelled, however, the

moment they see the entry hall. It has seats facing a gleaming, polished staff desk, and stretched and tacked-down bearskin rugs cover the floor. A lovely sweeping wooden stair adorned with tinted-glass candle lanterns climbs from this hall to the upper floors. The staircase overhangs a ballroom, which is seldom used for dances but is handy for setting down luggage when large groups arrive or depart). The ballroom's elegantly wood-paneled walls are studded with doors opening into an array of private dining rooms or meeting rooms that can be rented by the evening. In front of the ballroom is a manywindowed common feast hall. It features a magnificent fireplace adorned with stag's heads until it looks like a wild forest of antlers.

Behind the staff desk are offices and kitchens, and the kitchens are in turn connected to extensive pantries and root cellars below. The Buckoonwatches say they store enough food at all times to feed the entire Dale comfortably-with all the servings one could want, and no skimping-for the longest, hardest winter one could imagine. After seeing several rooms devoted just to jars of pickles, and a wine cellar that looked like an endless warren, I can well believe such claims. The staff insisted that if I mentioned the richness of the inn larders, I also note that several mantrap cages await unwary thieves in the cellars.

All this is ample and grand enough, but one's stay at any hostelry comes down to the privacy and appointments of just where one sleeps—and it is here that the Swordsmith's House shines. Two floors of guest rooms offer connected suites on the lower floor, and smaller individual rooms





are available on the upper. Each guest room has its own bath, walk-in wardrobe, and canopied bed. There are even hammocks available for those who prefer such for slumber.

Even the smallest room has paintings or tapestries on the walls. Guests can buy these if they wish; three of the halfling lasses are skilled painters and have a score or more paintings—all on wooden board, so the traveler need have no fears as to the durability of a purchase—in readiness to replace any that are taken away.

All chambers also have all the pleasantly carved, comfortable furniture one could want, from easy chairs to footstools to luggage tables to bedside "longarm" tables that have a leaf one can swing out over the bed to hold books or drinks. Sachets are placed in corners to

make the rooms smell pleasant, chambers are aired whenever guests are absent, and the place is thoroughly soundproofed with the best spells available in Sembia.

#### The Prospect

The house-pride and attention to detail of the owners and staff make this house a quietly luxurious stopover that some merchants even use for retreats, staying here a tenday or more to relax, breathe the clean mountain air, and rendezvous for business meetings on neutral ground, as it were, with rivals or partners. Other folk use it for more amorous meetings, coming here to be with folk they dare not be seen with at home. The nobles of Cormyr and the rich, self-styled merchant "nobles" of Sembia have both taken to arranging business trips in



each other's countries and just stopping here on the way instead.

It is not unusual to discover that one's fellow guests include knights and lords of Cormyr, powerful merchant princes of Sembia, agents of the Harpers, war wizards, and royal household members. The latter two or three types are usually keeping an eye on the first two or three types-whether or not they know it. The meeting rooms at the Swordsmith's House have seen not only some surprising things done on the tables, but some conversations wherein great matters have been decided that shape the lives of folk in entire Realms or change the existing' balances of power in politics or in the practice of magic. I would give a lot to hear some of what is said in some of those rooms, and I suspect that Yandrin Thorl does give a lot (in both coins and magical aid) to the Buckoonwatch family in return for the opportunity to work some "listening for later" spells in those rooms that can record all sounds for him to listen to at another time!

My favorite comment about the Swordsmith's House came from Princess Alusair Nacacia of Cormyr who once spent an adventuresome four days here with a holy warrior of Sune, one Ranald Ironblood of Turmish. According to the princess, "The Swordsmith's House is the only place I've ever stayed where the staff *helped* me pounce on someone and propel him backward into a tub full of grapes—and then cleaned up afterward! A great place—I cannot praise it enough. No snobby airs, just gracious patience and helpfulness. I'll be going back!"

It should noted that her father Azoun and his queen have also been seen at the Crossed Swords (the nickname given to the inn in Cormyr) though the place was apparently so crawling with war wizards at the time (registered as guests, of course) that nobody else could get a look at their majesties. I have even heard a rumor that Vangerdahast, firmly in disguise, uses the place for covert conferences with various undercover agents of Cormyr—the meetings are strictly related to intelligence-gathering for the Forest Kingdom, I am sure.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Provender

All of the exalted guests that this inn hosts would not come back if the food were inferior—or would insist on bringing their own cooks. My stay was enlivened with superlative chicken cooked with almonds and mountain duck with a persimmon-and-orange sauce that was both tart and hot. I heartily recommend both.

The Buckoonwatch cooks were happy to share the secrets of their kitchen with me so long as I printed only one of their recipes. I chose one traditional to the High Dale that they are known for: High Dale lamb. One can find it repeated in many home kitchens in Highcastle and elsewhere.

#### The Prices

A stay at the Swordsmith's House costs 13 sp per night, stabling included. Folk who drop in just for meals pay 1 gp for all they can eat and drink (carrying away a single hamper is allowed) or 5 sp for all they can eat with drinks costing extra. Nonguests

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster: Nice to see Volo annoying some other old wizard with his sly revelations for a change. (Chuckle.)



## High Dale Lamb

Divers pieces of Lamb Leg 1 stick of celeny fill a greatpot I handful of ground

or shoulder, enough to 1 pour dry red wine (of any quality, so long as IT be not yet vinegar) 1 pinch crated nutmec

black pepper 1 handful of salt 1 clove garlic 1 ονίον

8 knives butter 1 sideslab 6 of bacon 6 handfuls fresh cherries

1 carrot

Stone the cherries, cut the Lamb into bite-sized cubes, and slice The carrot, onion, celery stick, and carlic into strips (separately). Then set a creatpot at The edge of a goodly fine to warm and chop the pork into small cautels. Put the pork into the greatpot and slide it onto the heat. frying the cantels until brown. ADD Then the butter to the pot and in it fry the Lamb, adding a little at a time and turning, until

browned. Remove then both pork and lamb and in Their places add onion, carroT, carlic,

and celery. FRY UNTIL LichTLv browned, Then Take The greatpot away from The fine and allow it to cool just until the sizzling ceases.

Then add back in the Lamb and pork, pour the wine over all, and season to taste with salt and pepper. (Here Let it be said that nich every cook doth add a secret seasoning at this fair tyme.) Cover the creatpot and put it back on the fire, cooking until the Lamb is just starting to feel tender to thy fork. 8 Then stir in the cherries, and cook until the meat

is Tender and The cherries soft. 9 Then Let The dish be served hot and right speedily.

pay 5 sp pay night per beast for stabling, which always includes a full rub-down and hoof care.

If the "drinks extra" option is chosen, prices are 8 cp per talltankard for beer and 6 cp/tallglass for wine. All Dragon Reach region brands of beer and ale are available, and the wine cellar is splendid; many large, haughty inns in Sembia cannot match it. Guests pay 1 gp per meal with all they can drink included - a bargain, knowing what I saw downed on my visit!

#### Travelers' Lore

The Swordsmith's House has acquired a ghost. The phantom of a haggard, fullyarmored knight with drawn sword in hand stalks the upper floor hallways by night. He is silent, does not react to guest salutations or actions, and passes harmlessly through all he encounters. He is said to be a Chessentan knightname unknown—whose stabbed body fell out of a wardrobe one day when a maid opened it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: This cut of pork corresponds roughly in amount to the pale plastic packages labeled "bacon" that I have found in thy fridges and, ah, supermarkets – an entire package, mind ye, not one of these paltry strips one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>This word, which means literally "a small bloody piece of flesh," means a triangular, flattish wedge or slice of meat in Dragon Reach cookery. In this case, the cook is making the equivalent of bacon.

About two hours.

About another half hour over most fires.



## The Wyvernfang

This tooth-shaped bare stone crag marks the eastern end of the High Dale, rearing up on the Dale's northern side.

(Hooknose Crag, the other local peak whose name is known to most travelers, is at the western end of the pass on the south side.) The Wyvernfang <sup>10</sup> is the reason Eastkeep bristles with ballistae and catapults and is so well-manned. It is also the main reason why the High Dale has always been the least popular route between Cormyr and Sembia.

As its name suggests, the Wyvernfang is home to a large family of wyverns. They lair in a large cavern high up on the sheer, bare southeastern face of the Fang. This cavern is extremely difficult to reach by climbing without being caught on the rock face by the wyverns, for there is almost always at least one of the beasts perched on watch somewhere near the Fang, waiting to see if someone is going to be foolish enough to bring livestock near or come riding alone on an unarmored horse without benefit of lances or companions.

The wyverns have grown wary of swooping to attack just anyone on the road because of Yandrin Thorl, who took to assuming disguises and going out with blasting spells at the ready to effortlessly collect a wyvern head for his researches and a wyvern tail for the kitchens of Swordsmith's House. And the wyverns do have a back way out of their cavern, which Yandrin discovered on the one occasion that he flew up to reduce them

all to ashes. They all took wing and scattered across the Thunder Peaks before he could destroy more than two of them.

A later attempt by the Dale Council to hire a school of wizards from Sembia to cleanse the Fang was thwarted by the Cult of the Dragon, who got wind of the scheme and arrived covertly to fight on the side of the wyverns. The resulting spell battle was a nightmare of chaos and bloodshed that the Highdalesmen do not want to soon see again.

It is thought that more than a dozen adult, full-sized wyverns lair in or near the Wyvernfang plus twice as many or more smaller younglings. At least one of the beasts is more intelligent than most of its kind. Increasing evidence, gleaned from identical reports given by several dragon-riding mages and pegasi-mounted adventurers who knew nothing of each other or the tales told by the other observers, is mounting that the wyverns have not devoured everything they have carried off. Instead, they have established herds of sheep and goats in several inaccessible (save by air) valleys in the heart of the Thunder Peaks range north of the High Dale. They can survive on these steady sources of food most of the time and need not attack dangerous targets on the road when driven by hunger.

Unfortunately, lone wayfarers or prospectors—especially when leading a train of pack mules—are not viewed by a wyvern as dangerous, but rather as a nice meal. Over the last 60 years or so (the time during which there have been constant reports, of wyvern trouble in the area), hundreds of travelers are thought to have been carried off and devoured by the wyverns. There is no sign that the beasts

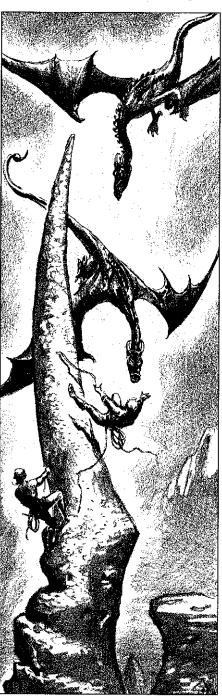
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>The location of the Wyvernfang is shown on the first map in the section on Highcastle earlier in this chapter.



keep humans or other intelligent prey to try to breed for food or use as ransom captives. Most such unfortunates, it appears, are eaten immediately by the wyvern catching them. If they do not, other wyverns tend to try to steal such a tasty morsel when they see it, the same way gulls squabble over a fish.

Since the wyverns have caused so many deaths, local legend holds that there must be treasure galore scattered in the wyverns' cavern and on the rocky heights nearby. Thus far, no Highdalesmen have cared to go looking for it, but they will happily sponsor any adventuring band in such explorations if they think the adventurers have half a chance of slaving wyverns. (Locals know that anyone who goes up on the Fang ends up battling the beasts.) Three adventuring companiesthe Bold Bravos of Selgaunt, the Company of the Bellowing Boar from Arabel, and the Hand in the Dark from Lyrabar-have assaulted the Wyvernfang in the last decade. Of them all, only two half-dead warriors returned to limp back to Lyrabar; and they claimed an unconfirmed score of six wyverns slain.

The High Dale militia members have become experts in striking specific areas of sky within missile range of Eastkeep, and their skill has ended the wyverns habit of gliding down through the Dale and snatching at sheep and goats with impunity. The last wyvern to try this tactic crashed down dead only a few wingbeats west of Eastkeep so transfixed by missiles as to resemble some sort of spiny dragon. In short: Be wary when on the road at the east end of the High Dale, but sometimes a single *magic missile* or flaming arrow might be enough to make a diving wyvern think better of attacking.









## Mistledale



erhaps the most fortunate Dale of all, Mistledale is almost entirely composed of the peaceful, fertile, welldrained, prosperous farm

country that the other Dales wish they had more of. Ancient elven lore tells us that eons ago a "falling star" tore a 100mile-long, 30-mile-wide swath of open country through the heart of the elven woods, destroying the elven realm of Uvaeren. Trees have never grown over that scar, but the land is unusually fertile-and is now, as Mistledale, one of the best agricultural regions in all Faerûn. Other Dales envy Mistledale its strategic location: It is protected against the aggressive powers (such as Zhentil Keep, Sembia, and more recently, Lashan of Scardale) and orc raids out of the wilderness by other Dales, but traversed by the Moonsea Ride, an important trade road linking the Moonsea with Cormyr and thence, the west.

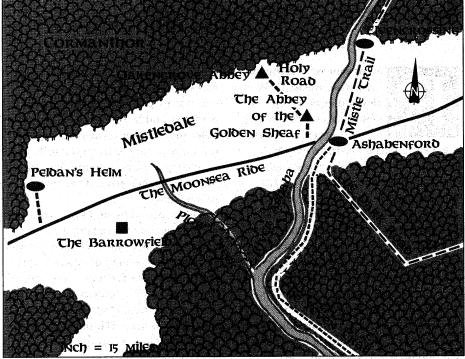
Where the Ride crosses the River Ashaba stands the capital of Mistledale, Ashabenford; the ford is so shallow and solid that a bridge has never been built. Ashabenford is another example of a tiny hamlet that in the Dales is graced with the title of "town" because of its local importance. Almost 500 folk dwell in Ashabenford. The next largest settlement in the Dale, Elven Crossing, is a quarter the size.

In the many years of relative peace, Mistrans have grown into prosperous folk indeed, and their farms have become truly the larder of the Dales. No other Dale has such large herds of cattle and sheep, and no other produces so much grain and hay. Potatoes, beets, parsnips, and leafy vegetables are the other major crops Mistledale's farmers sell throughout the Dragon Reach, and, via enterprising merchants, throughout the coastal lands around the Sea of Fallen Stars.

This prosperity—and the heavy road traffic that can move so quickly and easily through the Dale-has often brought thievery and the envy of others to Mistledale. Mistrans are quite conscious of the vulnerability and desirability of their land, so they have made laws and kept them, becoming a well-policed, careful, law-abiding folk, many of whom serve in the mounted, well-trained, and wellequipped, Mistledale militia in their youth. They revere their standing police force, the famous, lance-bearing, mounted Riders of Mistledale, who under their captain, Nelyssa Shendean, a paladin of Chauntea beloved of all Mistrans, patrol the Dale with vigor and diligence. Riders can arrest but not sentence, and they bring all malefactors before High Councilor Haresk Malorn in Ashabenford for sentencing. Most of these responsible and respected Riders are warriors, but some are paladins of Chauntea or rangers.

During the Time of Troubles, the Riders, bolstered by the militia, some Harpers, and the Knights of Myth Drannor, defended Mistledale against a Zhentarim-led army said by some to be over 7,000 strong! In a day-long battle that





saw Tempus, Lord of Battles, himself walk the field and the death and resurrection of Captain Nelyssa, the defenders of Mistledale inflicted a stunning defeat on the Zhent army, smashing it to rabble. The Riders then turned and rode up the Mistle Trail the next day to help defend Shadowdale against another Zhent force reportedly led by the god Bane himself!

## The Countryside

The countryside of Mistledale looks very much the same from end to end: rich farm fields broken by the occasional lane, stream, or wood lot, and here and there a cluster of buildings or a walled abbey. Fields tend to be divided by rail fences, not hedgerows, and little blocks one's view across miles of verdant growing lands.

The Moonsea Ride runs along the spine or center of Mistledale, which has been called by one sage "a gigantic sword whose tip points to the Standing Stone." The Ride is a high-banked dirt and gravel road wide enough for three wagons to pass abreast, sloping down into large ditches on either side. The only other major roads in the Dale meet the Ride in Ashabenford. Here the Mistle Trail runs north to Elven Crossing and thence to Shadowdale (the traditional friend and sister Dale to Mistledale), the Yeven Trail winds through the deep

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The tale of all this strife is told in the novel All Shadows Fled by Ed Greenwood (TSR, Inc., 1995).



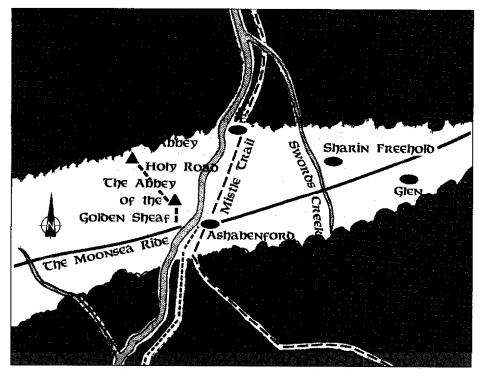
elven woods along the eastern bank of the River Ashaba to emerge into Battledale near the Fool of Yeven, and the Dark Road meanders to Essembra through the depths of the woods. The Dark Road is little used, and travelers are advised to avoid it, for it plunges into the very heart of the Vale of Lost Voices, the ancient burial grounds of the elves where banshees wail, baelnorn hold vigil, and elven ghosts drift through the trees seeking to destroy all nonelves who disturb the sacred forest fastness.

Although the Riders patrol as far as the eastern mouth of Tilver's Gap to ensure that brigands and raiding bands of orcs, hobgoblins, and bugbears do not lurk just outside the Dale awaiting bad weather or a moonless night to allow them to attack,

the western end of Mistledale is considered to be Darthan's Throat, a narrow passage between the woods. Folk have never dwelt here thanks to the prevalence of monsters at the western end of the woods of Cormanthor.

A traveler taking the Moonsea Ride east would soon come to the signposted trail leading off to the foresters' hamlet of Peldan's Helm. At the sign is a pump, a horse pond, and a watchtower where a Rider usually watches for incursions into the Dale.

Western Mistledale to about as far east as Plow Creek (located roughly halfway between Peldan's Helm and the River Ashaba) is a dangerous place. Monsters and brigands roam the many abandoned freeholds, and even all the





mercenaries Mistledale's gold can buy have not been able to clear the land of the monsters. They seem to breed and prowl faster than they can be slain. In fact, the numerous fell creatures that abound in the region is the reason the eastern flanks of the Thunder Peaks have never been settled.

Before reaching Plow Creek (which is just a ribbon of water, not any sort of settlement), travelers going east see a line of low, grassy hills to the south. These are the Barrowfield, a haunted area that Mistrans avoid; outlanders ought to do so, too, and the why is covered in detail in a later entry in this book. Proceeding east, one passes a hill crowned with a fire beacon for use in rousing the Dale against invasion, and the land promptly becomes more ordered, with well-kept farms, broad lanes, and a lot of activity. This area is where soil is being imported from the elven woods in an effort to get trees to grow in coppices that can be harvested regularly to yield poles and fence posts. Shortly before the Ashaba, the Holy Road, which leads to the two large abbey compounds in Mistledale, runs off from the Moonsea Ride. The Abbey of the Golden Sheaf, found just a few miles west of the River Ashaba and about the same distance north of the Ride, is sacred to Chauntea whose faith is the dominant one in the Dale. The road then winds northwest from that abbey through Oak Hollow and over Dunstar's Hill to Oakengrove Abbey, a monastic community dedicated to Silvanus, on the edge of the forest.

Going east from that abbey, travelers come to the upstream ford of the Ashaba, Elven Crossing. It is so-named because it is where the elves, who shun the open land of Mistledale where the Falling Fire destroyed so many of their brethren long ages ago, still choose to cross the Ashaba in the shelter of the trees. From there, most folk take the Mistle Trail south to the lower ford at Ashabenford because, although it is hard to get really lost in long, narrow Mistledale, it is quite easy to spend days wandering along lanes that all look about the same as each other and do not go in quite the way you want to head—unless you are a Mistran and know their windings well.

About halfway between Ashabenford and the Dale's eastern end is Swords Creek, where a few battered old trees stand on the banks of a tiny, muddy rivulet that winds across the Dale. Unimpressive to view, it is an important landmark to all Mistrans. This creek's intersection with the Moonsea Ride is where, throughout the years, the folk of the Dale have traditionally taken their stands to repel invaders from the east most recently, Lashan of Scardale and the Sword of the South Zhent army. So many folk have fallen here over the years that the priest Baergil, once captain of Mistledale's Riders, was able to raise here a mighty magic, the ring of skulls, that acts on the bodies of battle dead. His act cost him his life and won him the admiration of the war god, Tempus, who came to the field to take up Baergil's body. Tempus's appearance is an event that Mistrans still speak of in awe—for why would Tempus walk upon Toril save to claim a most faithful servant to be his own and serve him in some special way beyond death? Whatever the truth in all this, be aware that Mistrans do not take kindly to those who scoff at or belittle



tales of the heroism of that day or who do not show Swords Creek the same respect they do.

Not far north of Swords Creek is the rich and progressive farm of Sharin Freehold. It is run by Ulwen Sharin, a graceful matron who is one of the Six Councilors who rule the Dale. Here the visitor can see both fantastic herb gardens sprayed by an elaborate system of water pump fountains and livestock breeding programs of great complexity that seek to make cattle hardier and give pigs wings strong enough to let them fly for short distances to avoid harm.2 This. freehold stands in the heart of the richest, most splendid farms in Mistledale. The area is heavily patrolled by militia forces led by lone Riders in order to discourage theft and vandalism. (Rival Dales and Sembian interests have been known to hire rough folk to damage crops here to drive up prices for the sale of their rival commodities.)

East of this region and south of the Moonsea Ride sits the hardy hamlet of Glen, where travelers will probably be surprised to find a flourishing community of dwarven farmers! These doughty farmers bear the brunt of monster incursions from the south, for the elven woods in that direction are dangerous here at the eastern end of the Dale. And in the woods not far from Glen lurks the abandoned keep of Galath's Roost, known since the Zhent advance to be riddled with traps set by the Harpers.

Passing out of the Dale, travelers heading toward the nearby Standing Stone (the eastern limit of Rider patrols) encounter a tiny ruined keep and covered well where the open land of Mistledale ends and trees draw in around the road again. This is Treesedge, and the stretch of road between it and the Stone is sometimes called Bowshot Run because folk on the straight, tree-lined road can so easily be slaughtered by archers before or behind them. In earlier days, this area had a persistent brigand problem. Keeping lawless people from using Galath's Roost as a base as they once did is one of the reasons Mistrans have made no move to clear out the Harper traps there.

So ends your whirlwind tour of Mistledale. Unless you read a guidebook like this one, it is all too easy to dismiss this pleasant land as unutterably boring.

#### The Mistrans

Mistrans tend to be open-faced farmers who lead simple lives in tune with the weather and the ways of the land. Their wealth allows them to hire minstrels and order in books from the scriveners of Cormyr and Sembia, so do not make the mistake of thinking their simple lives have anything to do with simple wits! Nor are they craven, as the battle ballads of the Dales attest. It is generally agreed that the 5,000 or so folk who dwell openly in Mistledale as taxed, rolled citizens are good folk, blessed with a work ethic, respect for law, and lots of common sense. Elminster has called them "good friends and good folk," and I think that says it as well as anyone could.3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: So now ye know whether any pigs have wings without the need for a sage to tell ye.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster: Why thank ye — ye young, yapping dolt. Patronize me, will ye? I'll see if ye like life as a toadstool soon, see if I don't!



# The Abbey of The Golden Sheaf

This prosperous walled religious hold is dedicated to the worship of Chauntea Grainmother. Its heart is a series of 12 triangular fields fanning out from a circular center, where the many-spired abbey stands. Lanes circle the abbey and barns and fan out between the fields, running arrow-straight to cut them into a foursquare pattern and then dividing each quadrant into three equal "pie slices" of cultivation. These fields are over three miles long and are bounded by a broad road ringing them within the wall. The strip of land separating the two is planted as an orchard and herb garden. The wall itself, over which vines are trained, is an earthen bank as wide as a house lined on the outside by rubble that is home to many bees, wasps, snakes, and giant centipedes.

The abbey is very impressive. I have never elsewhere seen such fertility in a single holding this small. Goldenfields near Waterdeep is more impressive, but it is also much larger, more warlike, and established in a colder climate, so its plantings are less lush and more prone to incursions from ankhegs and other pests.

The abbey soars up in the center of it all, its stone spires stabbing the sky and impressing even the most jaded visitor. Extensive underground granaries stretch out from its cellars, and in the holy house dirt is packed down on the stone floors to encourage the growth of vines and creepers over every interior surface. Growing things are everywhere, and as the warm months pass, one is surrounded by a heady floral perfume while inside. As the name of the abbey suggests, wheat is supreme here, but the triangular fields

are planted in strict rotation, alternating wheat and like grains with other crops that restore to the soil what the wheat takes away to ensure the best possible health and yield for the wheat crop.

The abbey is said to have enough food stored away to feed all the Dales for years and enough wealth hidden in its walls to buy them all thrice over. It is known that the abbey was Lashan's main reason for turning north through Battledale rather than striking at the richer southern Dales. He gave strict orders not to harm the structures or crops when the abbey was taken—orders that were luckily never carried out, as his forces never got this far.

The clergy members practice private sacred rituals to Chauntea behind the abbey walls along with holding services open to lay worshipers. They also tend all sorts of exotic plants in growing houses set around the outside walls of the abbey so as to keep a constant store of seeds. (Some plants from the distant Mhair and Chultan jungles even have to be kept warm and damp with special spells.) Selling these seeds brings the abbey its greatest wealth, though it also does handsomely by shipping huge amounts of crops to realms where the crops have failed or war has prevented tillage and food is scarce.

The abbey is run by the soft-spoken, elderly, all-wise Reverend Brother Harvestmaster Derim Whiteshield. The woman representing it on the Council of Six is more typical of the zealous young clergy: Watchful Sister of the Earth Alena (calling her "Sister Alena" is sufficient to be respectful) can only be described as a fanatic who wants to turn all folk in Faerûn into workers in Chauntea's great garden.



## Ashabenford

The capital of Mistledale is a pleasant, informal cluster of homes, rustic cottages, and trees located primarily on the east bank of the Ashaba-though the White Hart inn is sited on the west bank hard by the ford. Most of the services a traveler might need are found along the Moonsea Ride, but one will search Ashabenford in vain for a large open market. Farmers coming here stop their carts in the yards and drive lanes of friends or those they have hired space from and sell produce directly from the tailboards. A merchant in search of a wagonload of something may well have to tour the back streets of Ashabenford-not that this is an unpleasant prospect.

Ashabenford is one of those places where folk too old or tired to do more gardening or farmwork for the time being go out for a stroll to chat or sit on their covered porches and hail passersby, They are open and friendly, and the wayfarer who does not appear too nosy can learn all about whatever news has come to Ashabenford in fairly short order. The smell of fresh manure may be strong here from time to time, but Ashabenford is a town that is easy on the eye—if not quite so easy on the purse. The inns here charge prices akin to Cormyr and Sembia, not the bargains found in the more rustic Dales.

#### Places of Interest in Ashabenford Unique Sites Heresk's Pool

The High Councilor Heresk's fish pond is a cool, placid swimming hole where his wife and daughters have sometimes been seen bathing bare-skinned in hot weather. Imbrautha, Heresk's wife, reports that the numerous fish "softly nip and nibble your toes like an infant trying to find where to suckle." Local legend says that this muck-bottomed pond holds the loot of a bandit captain—strongchests full of coins and jewelry. The bottom has been dragged four times, but nothing has yet been found. Visitors who embark on their own fifth attempt can expect a frosty reception from the Riders of Mistledale house guards.

#### Horsewater Pool

This muddy horse pond is fed by a spring that is led up through a pipe into a drinking bowl and pour spout before emptying endlessly into the pond. It is available for everyone's use, travelers and citizens alike, and can be a delight for mounts and riders after a long, dusty ride up the Dale on a sunny day. Posts at either end of the pond's paved front bear long lead reins, so a rider who does not want to get wet can lead a horse down into the water and along the length of the pool without getting—completely—wet.

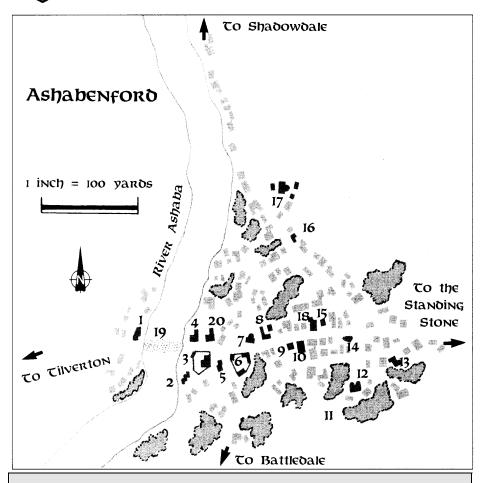
The folk of Ashabenford gather at the pond to gossip. It is a great place to meet folk and learn about local news, customs, and personalities. On hot summer days one of the old men of the village is always loudly vending pickles, fruit, and ice-cold beer here.

#### Residences

#### The House of the High Councilor

This grand, two-turreted manor house boasts brown fieldstone facing, many large windows, and a pair of sculpted stone griffons guarding the drive lane. It is not just the luxurious private home of the Heresk family (boasting an indoor bathing





#### Ashabenford Map Key

- 1. The White Hart (inn)
- 2. Thorm's Mill (grist mill)
- 3. Kaulvaeras Stables (horseseller and stables)
- **4.** Lhuin's Fine Leathers (tannery and leather goods shop)
- 5. The Velvet Veil (tavern and dance hall)
- **6.** The Ashabenford Arms (inn)
- 7. The Harvest Table (shrine to Chauntea)
- 8. Arlho's Fine Flasks (brewery and win-
- Multhimmer the Merchant (imported glassware, fine metal items, furniture, and general store)

- **10.** Braunstar Wheelwright (wagons, carriages, wagon parts, and repairs)
- 11. Heresk's Pool
- **12.** The House of the High Councilor (residence and Council of Six meeting place)
- **13.** Black Eagle Coster (merchant coster headquarters)
- 14. Horsewater Pool
- **15.** Jarwain's Imports (exotic textile, garment, and spice shop)
- **16.** Arvien's House (tinsmith and pewterer)
- 17. Barracks of the Riders of Mistledale
- **18.** Heresk's Hardware Emporium (hardware and general store)
- 19. The ford
- 20. The Six Shields (rooming house)



pool for six, not just bathtubs), but the seat of government for the Dale: Every three months, the Council of Six moves in and meets with Heresk here to vote on matters of import. (The Council is planning to build its own chambers in town soon—if it can only agree on where. Local landowners are all vying to sell them the site.) Visitors are normally not allowed into the House unless they have come to appear before the Council when it is sitting, but the front west turret has a door opening into an audience chamber where Heresk receives guests on Dale business at other times.

Heresk's scepter of office, the black, mysterious *Rod of Peldan*, floats high in the air of this audience chamber, but a thief once told me in confidence—and no doubt from unhappy experience—that the rod here is an illusion cast by the real rod that is concealed somewhere else. It is known that Heresk can call on the *Rod of Peldan* to defend him while he is sitting under it (or its image). Reports about the rod vary. Some swear it can entangle folk by shooting out a beam that creates an effect akin to *Evard's black tentacles*; others say it is simply a *rod of lordly might*.

Heresk is a wise, honest, slow-tempered man, who has both Rider and militia bodyguards at his house at all times. They guard his family and servants as well as himself. Any troubles guests may have here, they bring upon themselves.

#### Barracks of the Riders

The black-armored Riders of Mistledale, who all wear on the brows of their helms the "snorting horse heads" badge of the Dale or a red wheat sheaf if they are paladins of Chauntea, are based here in an

outlying compound on the northeast edge of town. Critics say the compound has been put here so the Riders can carouse unseen—and when called away to danger can ride right across the fresh crops instead of having to jump their horses over the fences and cottages of the town.

The stables, town jail, and militia apartments cluster around the Riders' barracks. (The jail is a surprisingly secure set of dungeon cells fitted with many barred and locked massive iron grate doors.) The barracks also do service as the armory, emergency Dale granary, and treasury vaults. In the emergency granary, enough food and spring planting seeds are always stored to see the Dale through a winter in the event of the greatest disaster: a foe who scours the Dale with fire, destroying everything.

Except when the Dale is actually at war, 50 to 60 militia members are always here training under the instruction of half-adozen Riders at the barracks, and another 10 or so are patrolling the town and vicinity. Riders can summon each other by a distinctive rising two-note ("blast-blup!") horn call. All of them wear a horn at their belts and have a spare hidden under the raised back of their saddles.

#### Shrine

#### The Harvest Table

Ashabenford has no full temples, but this roadside building may soon become one. The Harvest Table is run by an ambitious young priestess, Watchful Sister of the Earth Jhanira Barasstan, who serves the bounty of the land freely to all who stop in. She dishes up fruits and vegetables from the farms of the Dale that she prepares for dining without the use of a cook flame or any seasonings not found locally



and gives this fare out without charge to anyone entering the shrine. This free food has made the place a hit with locals and travelers alike and won Jhanira her share of annoyances in the form of marriage proposals from admiring diners. Only the gods can say if her enthusiasm will ever make the Table into a proper temple of Chauntea, given its close proximity to the Abbey of the Golden Sheaf.

#### Shops

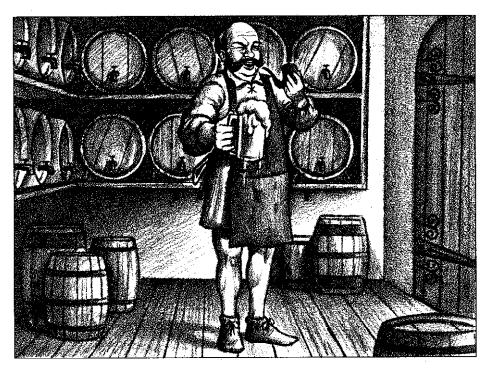
Arlho's Fine Flasks Brewery and Winery



This brewery and winery battles Lhuin's tannery in the war of smells the traveler encounters along the Moonsea Ride and usually loses. Step inside, and it is a differ-

ent story. The beer and wine made here are of exceptional quality—do not miss Arlho's Ashaben Ale and his pride and joy, Black Boot Stout, or the silky-smooth Pearls of the Moon green grape wine (a delight despite its bilious color). Passing caravans snap up all Arlho has to sell, but he increases his production only enough to make sure Mistrans do not go without.

I asked him why he did not expand—his drinks are as good as any made in Cormyr, Sembia, or the Vast—and Arlho told me he has coin enough to live quite comfortably and does not want to grow larger and "lose the magic." Well said—but travelers should move therefore fast to get any handkegs on offer (5 sp for all ales, 7 sp for Black Boot Stout, and the wines go from 4 sp to 7 sp) before the next merchant through snaps them up.





#### Arvien's Home

Tinsmith and Pewterer



The skilled, shrew-tempered local tinsmith and pewterer Arvien Blackhair dwells here, spending much of her time sitting in the window watching the passing traffic. The women of the town say she does not miss noticing when someone in Ashabenford "breaks a nail in their bedchamber." I noticed her strolling around the back streets of the town in the early evening, and her eyes certainly missed nothing. When she passed me by, I felt like I had been laid out under strong lights for an examination of every wart and mole!

Arvien works in the back rooms of her home and certainly turns out topquality goods-for top prices. She uses her parlor to show off samples of her work. Lots of buyers stop in to take tea or wine and examine the tankards, goblets, bowls, salt cellars, bells, and spice dishes on display. If they place an order and leave a deposit, Arvien sets to work. Her business is making identical items in large quantities (for example, 300 tankards for an inn, all inscribed with the arms of the establishment), and it takes someone of rare skill to make so many of something and have them all be come out the same.

Arvien lives alone. She occasionally has guests who stop over for a night, but more than one of these has left hurriedly in the morning with Arvien's shrieks ringing in his ears and lumps of miscast metal bouncing about his head and shoulders—to the amusement of the neighbors.

#### **Black Eagle Coster**

Caravan Shipping, Provisions, and Small-Scale Brewing



From this small warehouse at the east end of town, a former adventuring band led by the swordsman Iletian Blackeagle buys local grain, ale, cheese, and barrels of salted meat and runs them to Hillsfar and the harbors of Harrowdale and Scardale for sale overseas. The coster is not interested in selling wares that can earn it so much at dockside to passersby and overcharges anyone who wants to buy one of the wheels of cheese stacked in the window.

Iletian makes his own beer on the side—but the raw, fiery (I swear he uses pepper!) Blackeagle Brew is not for most palates. I am told it is a hit in Glister, though, when the nights are cold—but I have no wish to go there just to appreciate it.

#### Braunstar Wheelwright

Wagons, Wagon Wheels, and Carriages



Elmo Braunstar is a wise, quiet man and an expert at his craft: making and repairing wheels, wagons, and carriages. Braunstar's wisdom, far-sightedness, kind understanding and ability to keep secrets have made him the man to talk over problems with for all within easy reach of Mistledale. He has the ability to see to the heart of a problem, and clearly outline realistic options. (Braunstar hates his first name, by the way; do not use it.)

Braunstar's prices are so reasonable that many merchants frequenting his



establishment on their way through Mistledale buy a pair of spare wheels, purchasing two so they match each other in size and can be used on an axle no matter what size the wheels they replace were. (One cannot choose the place where one's wagon will break down, but wheels at least are portable.) As a result, Braunstar never has enough wheels, despite keeping six partners busy in the workshop at all hours.

Many nobles drive his Swanswing covered carriages (with the slide-back suncover), and his Fleetrun long wagons are the pride of Dragon Reach caravan merchants. The long wagons back-ordered for three years as a result, and they have become desirable items for thieves even when empty!

### Heresk's Hardware Emporium Hardware and General Store

# 5 5 5 5

The long-time Malorn family business, this shop (despite its grander name) is simply an old, cluttered general store. The high councilor is too successful and too busy with Dale business to run this shop himself any more, but he has several elderly relatives and trusted retainers who do so for him who dwell on the upper floor of the shop.

Do not miss the carved wooden shark hanging from the ceiling! It was carved long ago for the use of a wizard in ridding the Ashaba of the monster water snakes known as the quelzarn. (The wizard's spell unfortunately failed.) It is a good 12 feet long and sports ferocious teeth guaranteed to haunt the dreams of any youngling who gets a good look at it!

### Jarwain's Imports

Exotic Textiles, Garments, and Spices



This half-elven warrior buys cottons, lace, silks, and rare spices in Cormyr and runs them here by swift caravan (guarded on the perilous run through a business arrangement he declines to discuss) for sale at rather steep prices. He has an eye for the finest goods and finished garments with flair, though, and the Mistran ladies are in and out of his shop all day like birds fluttering around fresh seed. Like Arvien, Jarwain spends a lot of time at the window, watching travelers go by—and does not seem to miss one detail of their wares, origins, or equipment.

Jarwain is a soft-spoken but fire-eyed fellow who guards his shop with some sort of enchanted, animated blade. It hovers ready when he is opening or locking up. He has a magnificent, polished, flat, brass filigree dragon sculpture bolted to the wall behind his desk, but its origin and why he favors it so are other things he does not discuss.

### Kaulvaerus Stables

Horseseller and Stables



This walled compound located on the east bank of the ford and across the road from Lhuin's Fine Leathers is the saleyard of Kaulvaerus Greymantle. His huge horse farm is found well south and east of town. One of the better horsebreeders in the Dales, Kaulvaerus keeps a fine selection of riding horses here and sells at fair prices for the quality on offer. Travelers trading in a tired or lame mount can get prices



down to somewhat of a bargain, but the kind-hearted Kaulvaerus puts such beasts out to pasture. He does not risk harming his reputation by selling horses he has not bred and reared. The lucky traveler may occasionally find a battle-ready war horse for sale here.

### Lhuin's Fine Leathers

Tannery and Leather Goods



This aromatic tannery and workshop is the pride of Lhando Lhuin, who sells belts, leather armor, bridles, lead reins, weather cloaks, wide-brimmed hats, horse collars, and saddles of his own making here at prices that average about 10% less than can be found elsewhere! Lhuin refuses to make gloves or boots, saying he is just not good enough, but the wares he does sell are the equal of any I have purchased. His shop is a "must" stop for any merchant or traveler in need of fresh harness.

#### Multhimmer the Merchant

Imported Glassware, Fine Metal Items, Furniture, and General Store



This general store tends more toward furniture and finished items than its competitor, Heresk's Emporium, which in turn concentrates more on nails, pegs, lashings, lamp oil, and the like. Multhimmer, in turn, also sells most things at about 20% more than one would pay in, say, a streetside shop in Sembia. He specializes in imported glassware and fine metal items such as lamps, platters, wall hooks, and adornments. I suspect he also discreetly deals in all sorts of stolen goods, taking care to keep his hands clean

when dealing with his fellow Mistrans and their personal property.

### Thorm's Mill

Grist Mill



Mistledale's only mill is this bustling, flour-caked place. It is busy at all hours grinding the wheat, oats, and other grains of Dale farmers. The owner, Thorm Ubler, always has milled flour to sell to passing caravans—even if some of it is not his. Thorm is a greedy miser who takes advantage of his monopoly to shamelessly overcharge customers. The river is too shallow and low at Elven Crossing for a proper mill, and three attempts to build a rival grist mill downstream along the Yeven Trail have ended in mysterious fires and murderous bandit raids.

However, everyone in Ashabenford wishes Thorm good health and long life, because his two cruel, sneering sons, Heldo and Parvus, are even worse! They spend their days playing pranks, shirking work, fighting with anyone they do not like the look of (which includes all strangers—be warned) and trying to buy the favors of any woman unwise enough to come within spitting distance of them.

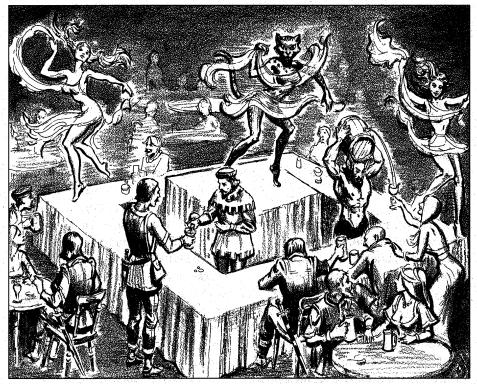
#### Tavern

The Velvet Veil



This cheerfully rowdy dance hall long ago took over the task of slaking thirsts from the Ashabenford Arms (which is now an inn with no taproom for walk-in patrons) and goes at it in fine spirit. Folk often stop over in town for an extra night so as to spend most of a day in here dancing,





watching others dance, drinking, and talking with other guests.

Others come here because the Velvet Veil's features exotic dancers. Shows spotlight a tabaxi whose dances leave every man in the room sweating and even a centauress, among others. Veils fly in all directions during performances, and female guests sometimes leave in scandalized disgust—unless they discover the room around the back where male dancers, including satyrs, prance and preen in front of hollering, whistling women!

Those who'd rather sit in peace or talk business quietly in private can use the booths and curtained alcoves of the Quiet Rooms upstairs. Spells ensure that the sounds of festivities below do not annoy, but they might not prevent listeners in adjacent booths from overhearing what is said. Above the Quiet Rooms are several floors of bedchambers where the dancers bathe after their exhausting performances or when those who work as escorts bring guests. Dancers and guests can quickly get to the back door from all floors by means of a greased brass sliding pole.

Overall, the Velvet Veil is an impressively appointed, fun place. But do not get overactive in your enjoyment: The exadventurer owners act as their own well-armed security service.

#### lnns

The Ashabenford Arms

SEE BEEFE

If the recently opened White Hart is Ashabenford's fun, informal inn for adventurers, the Arms is its time-honored house of quality. The all-inclusive (save for even feast and drinks) fee here is 16 sp per



head. That buys the best service in the Dales and just about anywhere else. Guests each have a discreet, kindly—and quite good-looking-personal attendant from the time they arrive until their farewell. The attendant is male if the guest is female, female if he is a man, and seems more like an old friend than anything else. They escort the shy to the dining room, see to all clothing and food needs at all hours and clean up behind one—but no, they do *not* provide the personal services of a festhall.

Many merchants divert from faster overland routes to stay at the Arms and be pampered for a few days. The staff members even remember what drinks regulars like and have them ready. Where else could a guest who falls asleep in the bath find herself dried, taken to her room on a dignified draped litter, and put gently to bed, all without being awakened? Or on first arrival, find his escort has seen his weariness and whisked him to his room to prop him up in bed with a mug of hot soup while she washes his feet? Bliss. Inns do not get any better than this. (I have tried to hide this entry away here in the midst of my discussion of sites of lesser import rather than setting it off by itself only because I do not want the Arms overcrowded and ruined.)4

The Six Shields

\$ \$ B B

This rough-and-dirty, recently opened rooming house stands east (downwind) of Lhuin's tannery. Its open front porch is where residents sit most evenings (for inexplicable reasons, considering the ambient windborne odors). In the words of Elminster, the Shields was "opened to house field workers, drovers, and others too cheap to stay at the Hart or the Arms." A room here is 1 cp per night or 6 sp per tenday, and includes stabling and two simple meals of milk, cheese, and hardbread per day.

The White Hart

SEE BUE

One gold piece a night buys a guest at the White Hart stabling and horse care, a luxuriously furnished room, the use of hot and cool bathing tubs shared with other guests (eight or so of whom can get in at the same time—and will), and all the tales of adventure one cares to hear. This inn is run by an adventurer, the warrior Holfast Harpenshield, and caters to adventurers—and, yes, to Harpers, who seem to lounge about the place playing soft music, chatting, and sharpening their blades at all hours.

I loved this place. It has good, simple, hearty food, lots to drink, and good folk to share it all with. Most folk who love the spice of danger and far travel will love it, too. Harpenshield even keeps a secret safehouse<sup>5</sup> for hiding away folk of good intent whose escapades have gotten them into trouble. I highly recommend the Hart.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Ah. Discretion at last. Self-serving, I see, but discretion nonetheless.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster: No! Not again! Volo, ye utter and complete dolt! Be a frog! Aye, be a frog a long, long time! (Thy long tongue should be admirably suited to catching flies.) Ah, well, but the damage is done. On second thought, I shall save thy punishment for another day—I have just had an inspired thought about some clandestine work I shall—request—that ye do.



## The Barrowfield

This line of low, grass-girt mounds is about 30 miles south and east of Peldan's Helm in the dangerous "Beast Country" of western Mistledale. Mistrans shun the mist-shrouded hills, believing them to be haunted by the nameless dead buried here. It is commonly known in the Dale that the hills are tombs: Walking skeletons were unleashed from one of them some years ago when a band of outlaws dug into the most easterly mound, thinking they had found the site of brigand treasure. (The robbers tried this spot after slaying a gullible old merchant who had bought a fake old treasure map in Scardale. Because the old man fought so fiercely to keep it, they thought the map must be real.)

After consultations with several sages and a peek at the library in the Leaves of Learning in Highmoon, I can say with certainty that there are still undead guarding the Barrowfield. They are the remains of Netherese who fled here after some battle or magical disaster. These survivors soon perished, as they were horribly changed so that they sickened and died by what is recorded as "overexposure to magic."

Much of what I read about them is speculation, but it seems they were either cursed or willingly linked to a specific magical item each—and suffered unforeseen effects. This magical "twisting" (akin to the wild magic zones now abroad in Faerûn) made the Netherese into wraiths who are unturnable and, it seems, undestroyable. If slain, they vanish back into the buried magical items to which they are each linked, only to reappear the next day. Moreover, each wraith can emit a sin-

gle spell effect of the item to which it is linked in a beam it can control as a weapon. One sage writes of what can only be an *ice storm* unleashed by a wraith on shepherds who tried to camp on one barrow hill; another describes a *cone of cold* being hurled at adventurers from behind by a wraith that rose up out of ground they had walked over.

Some brave adventurers, the Proud Mace band of Westgate, managed to "send down" (temporarily destroy) all of the wraiths in a titanic spell battle and proceeded to dig up some of the items. They soon discovered that the wraiths remained linked to the items—not the tombs—when they reappeared, attacking fiercely, the next day at the same location the items had been moved to. Wounded and low on magic, the Proud Mace members barely survived this second battle, so they returned the items to the barrow and fled, hoping to be rid of the nightly wraith attacks—which is what happened.

As far as the Riders of Mistledale know, only a lone brigand band has recently dared to dig into the barrows. They dug up the grassed-over but clearly disturbed earth where the Proud Mace adventurers had dug and carried off only one item: some sort of magical rod with thorny protuberances and glowing inset gems. They had traveled only a little way from where they obtained the rod before succumbing to the wraith attacks. To prevent the reach of the undead creatures (who seem to stay within a certain distance of their items) from extending further toward the Dale, the Riders bravely rode in and bore the rod back to the digging. Presumably, it remains there to this day. Needless to say, camping on or near the barrow hills is not recommended.



## Elven Crossing

This settlement of a little over a hundred folk shelters in the trees on the edge of the elven woods where Mistledale ends and the River Ashaba emerges from the forest in its run down from Shadowdale. The Mistle Trail passes through Elven Crossing, which, as its name suggests, is where elves like to cross the river. They either ford it here or go upstream a little way to the Living Bridge. This little-known local landmark is a massive shadowtop partially uprooted in a long-ago spring flood. It toppled across the river but was caught in two other trees and wedged in a horizontal position. It is healthy, and its branches leaf out each year to cloak the huge trunk in a bower that conceals folk using it to cross on foot; it is not wide enough for a wagon to use it.

Elven Crossing itself is a small, shady place of woodcarvers, hunters, and mush-room-pickers. These folk love the forest and augment their incomes by hunting for herbs that grow wild in sun-dappled glades deep in the woods. They react very severely—usually with a warning arrow shot into the flames—to folk who light campfires along the Mistle Trail except in a stone hearth. These fire hearths have been built by the folk of the Crossing all along the forest run of the Mistle Trail to prevent forest fires from sweeping their livelihood—or their community—away

Elven Crossing has no inns or taverns, but does have two large pavilions—one by the riverbank and one at the eastern end of the settlement beside the Mistle Trail—that are set aside for travelers. These have pump wells, privies, hammocks, rough wooden tables and chairs, stone hearths and chimneys, stocks of ready-cut fire-

wood, and local folk to watch over them. The "overseers" are viewed by the folk of the Crossing as a necessity since the time one chilled group of wayfarers decided to chop up all the furniture and build a fire to keep warm—and promptly set their pavilion on fire.

Lacking a tavern, locals gather for drinks at Amaratha's Teahouse. Travelers looking for conversation, a bite to eat, and something to drink should go there. They will find that some odd folk live in Elven Crossing—but then, it is an odd place.

### Places of Interest in Elven Crossing Shop

**Dusty Dragon Pottery** *Jugs and Figurines* 

8 8

Dusty Dragon is a tiny shop where six flighty-headed local women sell the cute dragon and mushroom figurines they make. They also make some fine jugs whose spouts are smiling beard faces, too. The shop is worth a look.

### ResTaurant Amaratha's Teahouse

8 8

Made out of the hollow stumps of three massive trees joined together, this place is all windows and chatter. Locals come here to drink various woodberry teas and eat honeyed biscuits or Amaratha's (very good, sharp!) marbled green cheese—which one can buy in bulk if interested. Amaratha also serves brandy and some wines made from forest plants. Amaratha's is a very relaxing and unique stop—I would recommend it.



## Galath's Roost

This abandoned keep began its life as the hold of a bandit leader who raided the Dales and caravan traffic in the area so long and successfully that his band outgrew the caverns they had been using (caverns that lie east of Rauthauvyr's Road in the trackless depths of the Elven Court woods northeast of Haptooth Hill). He and his fellow outlaws won wealth enough to have this keep put up on a rocky knoll in the woods overlooking Mistledale. From its battlements Galath's bandits could easily see caravans approaching down through the Dale or lob stones at any armed bands that came near by means of catapults.

Galath eventually grew bolder and saw himself as the ultimate and rightful ruler of the rich farms of Mistledale and the lawful owner of the roads around the Standing Stone. He felt justified in charging a steep safe-passage toll on all traffic going past the Stone on these roads. This toll was too much for merchants in the newly founded land of Sembia. They hired scores of mercenary mages, warriors, and fighting priests in Calimshan and Tethyr and formed a force that descended on the Roost to blast it open and either kill Galath and his fellow robbers or transform them. into creatures of the sea so that they died lingering, painful deaths, flopping about and unable to breathe or keep cool.

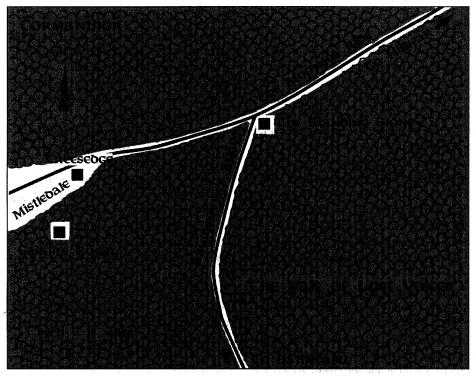
The Sembians decided to leave the ruin as a reminder to all brigands of the folly of their lawless trade, but their plan backfired: From the time the mercenary force left the riven keep, frustrated in its attempts to find the treasure Galath was widely rumored to have hidden there, brigands have used the ruined Roost for

shelter—except when monsters too powerful to overcome chose it as a lair. Throughout the centuries since, Galath's Roost has always been a dangerous place avoided by Mistrans and all other lawabiding folk, though adventurers have probed it from time to time in search of the legendary treasure.

When the Time of Troubles came down on the Realms, Harpers came to the Roost knowing that the Swordlord of the Zhentarim-led mercenary army being whelmed in the lower Dales and northern Sembia intended to use it as a base from which to assault Mistledale and then command the Standing Stone traffic just as Galath had intended. The Harpers transformed the place into a series of falling-rock and collapsing-floor traps. Many warriors perished there when the Zhent army tried to occupy the Roost. Adventurers are warned that many of the Harper traps remain unsprung, since the Zhents perished in still other traps before reaching them. One Harper estimates that over 600 traps were worked into the riven keep, which today stands quietly among cloaking pines with gaping holes in its walls inviting tramps and foresters alike in.

Persistent fireside stories in the northern Dales tell that the Roost is haunted by the ghosts of Galath and his band. These were confirmed for me by Rhauntides of Highmoon, who said he investigated the Roost years ago and found it swarming with wraithlike undead guarding the lowest crypts. These lowest passages were flooded by a natural spring and were the area where he believed the treasure must be. Some adventurers evidently thought the same thing, because their drowned bodies were floating in the lightless





waters. Some sort of magic was also lighting up the waters from time to time as it was unleashed from some unknown active item beneath them.

Interestingly, the dwarves of the nearby hamlet of Glen recount a legend that insists that gates from other worlds open into the flooded crypts of the Roost, and that some of the drowned bodies Rhauntides saw were of otherworldly creatures who could not survive when they found themselves deep underwater. Recent Harper reports (deliberately made public around the Dales to alert folk) indicate that priests of Cyric and of Loviatar have been nosing around the Roost and surveying it—and its traps-for ritual uses. The reports also say that on both forays the evil clergy were intercepted and run off by

Dragon Cultists, who have taken to camping in the woods east of the Roost and evidently view it as an ideal site for establishing a new dracolich lair.

All of these activities would seem to make the place too crowded for those seeking adventure to even reach, but other, less public Harper reports say that in the last three years no less than six adventuring bands have perished in—or suffered very heavy losses before retreating from—the Roost. These secret reports also say that larger explorative bands of Red Plumes from Hillsfar (obviously acting under orders from Maalthiir) and hireswords acting for someone in Sembia also came to grief in the crumbling Roost.



### Glen

Situated south of the Moonsea Ride at Mistledale's eastern end where the Dale is narrow enough that one can clearly see the boundary forest to both north and south, Glen is a hamlet of stone-and-thatch cottages that is much grander than it appears. It fills a small gorge or depression in the ground, so that what look like single-story cottages from afar prove to descend three floors or more to the cobbled, steeply sunken streets. An elaborate system of drainage gutters collect rainwater safely into cisterns to prevent flooding, but ice must make the streets deadly for much of winter!

Glen is home to many dwarves who are masters of farming on platforms held up on poles, in tubs, and in cellars (where mushrooms are grown). They also specialize in growing crops under glass frames in the depths of winter, and they seem to be doing quite well at it. I have never seen such a contented community of red-cheeked, jolly dwarves in all my life! (Humans and a few halflings dwell here, too.)

Glen is more than just a market town for the area. It has the expected smiths and masons, and one can see gears and wheels and metal machinery all around, but Glen is also home to the only mine in the Dale: the Deep Mine. For hundreds of years the smug folk of Glen have kept secret something that would make their fellow Mistrans rise up to smite them and have the mine closed with spells and rocks, a secret I believe I am the first to reveal to any outsider. This is the dark truth—the Deep Mine is not a mine at all, but an elevator into the Underdark!

It seems the dwarves of Glen trade their extra produce not with the folk of Faerûn at all but with the distant realm of Dwarves' Deep and other dwarven communities along the way. They move their produce and goods by means of the Long Road, a route that stretches for thousands of miles through the Underdark and is under constant attack from drow and other fell races. Knowing that an army from the depths could well boil up into the heart of their verdant farms would make the Mistrans sleep a little uneasily of nights, I am sure!

This Underdark connection explains why certain dwarven merchants come here so often to "buy mushrooms" when they must be able to get lots of them nearer home. Not only are they getting the large, luxurious 'shrooms of the Underdark, they are bringing in goods to trade for something far more precious: dragon eggs. Yes, they trade for unhatched but fertilized dragon eggs that are kept cool in cellars in Glen to inhibit their growth until buyers take them away I have seen these treasures, and like all true dragon eggs, they are white and leatheryskinned and about as long as a small human child is tall. (In other words, they look like turtle eggs of gigantic size.)

If, as I did, you fancy acquiring your own investment—or if you are crazy enough to think you can rear, feed, and tame a pet dragon—you too can buy dragon eggs from certain farmers in Glen. You may have to line up behind Dragon Cultists, though, to do it, and you will need to collect coins for a while to make your purchase: These days, the things go for 17,000 gp or more—usually *much* more.

Here is how to tell what type of wyrm might hatch from an egg: Hold the egg up

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Elminster: Ah, no! Volo! Volo! Don't ye give a moment's thought to the consequences of what ye say?





to a strong white light of either a burning strip of magnesium or a spell's glow. (Under normal daylight or yellowish torchlight dragon eggs simply look white, and any tinges of color you see cannot be trusted.) With white light behind the egg, the tinge of color seen in the dragon egg tells the species within, as follows:<sup>7</sup>

- Very faint reddish spots: red dragon.
- *Purple:* shadow, deep, or amethyst dragon.
- Yellow: brown dragon (only!).
- Webwork of thin blue lines: blue dragon.
- Greenish-white: a type of dragon whose breath weapon is a gas or vapor probably green or white.
- Gold flecks: copper or bronze dragon.
   (Bronze eggs have fewer and larger spots; copper eggs have many tiny spots.)

Experts know far more about egg hues and their meanings than the few indicators I have set down here, and a person should get expert advice if contemplating the outlay in gold such a purchase would entail.

## Places of Interest in Glen

lnn

The Dark Door

Once Glen's big secret becomes clear, the cryptic name of this inn becomes all too obvious. The Door is expensive, well-furnished (though *everything* is of stone) and pleasant enough. It is recommended—especially if one is a dwarf—but do *not* tell them I sent you.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Elminster: He is as smug as an illithid in a bowl of brains in revealing this, but I fear he is also right in this case.



## The Oakengrove Abbey

About 20 miles northwest of Ashabenford across the Ashaba on the edge of the elven woods is the second abbey of Mistledale: a walled stronghold that protects an ancient oak grove sacred to Silvanus. The abbey is almost hidden by trees, but its outer shape is defined by a large fortress ring studded with small towers, which are actually the cells where the priests live. The ring is almost a mile across and encloses a woodland alive with a wild variety of trees and crisscrossed by small chuckling streams and meandering paths. Wherever a path crosses a stream, the bridge takes the form of a tiny meditation hut, and these are lovely in their serenity. At the heart of the ring is a hill crowned with old, massive oak trees: the sacred grove itself.8 The priests have had to fight off some brigand raids over the years; it seems that one Dale rumor says treasure is buried here.

Only eight clerics now serve the Lord of the Forests within walls that once held over a hundred devout worshipers-and some of these priests are very old. They are led, however, by a young and ambitious man, Oakfather Gannon Durei, who was led here by a vision sent to him by the Divine Forestfather himself and dreams of fulfilling that vision by renewing old Oakengrove into the mighty community it once was. Gannon sees three things he must do to achieve this: attract wives (and even better, female clerics or druids) to wed the priests so that the cycle of life Silvanus speaks of can be followed within the abbey and younglings brought up to

revere the Forestfather from birth; make a reputation for the abbey by sponsoring adventurers to do great things in its name; and bring back living specimens of rare plants and trees and plant them in the abbey to bring about the abbey's own renewal. He hopes to hire adventures to scour western Mistledale of all monsters and then tackle the menaces lurking around Myth Drannor and Daggerdale in the abbey's name. He also plans on using hired adventurers to search out rare trees and flora for growing from seed or transplanting to the abbey, for he dare not risk himself or his dwindling flock of aged priests on such forays.

Gannon can only accept trustworthy folk to serve his abbey, and they must be led by one who worships Silvanus. Through the Harpers and hired merchants, he has located three such young men. They are bored noble younger sons from Sembia who have grown to hate the filth, crowding, and empty wealth of the cities they have grown up in. Gannon now desperately needs some adventurers of sylvan or good faiths to lead these young heroes before they grow bored and wander away from the abbey. As a result, Gannon has been advertising in Ashabenford and by means of merchants and is hopeful that adventurers will soon come to his isolated abbey who can pass his magical tests and prove worthy to serve Silvanus. If the youths or, even better, an adventuring band of greater size grows to become loyal to the abbey, Gannon could die content, secure in the knowledge that he had at least set the abbey on the road to recovery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>For the powers of a sacred grove, refer to Appendix 7 of FA1 *Halls of the High King* or the similar summary of their abilities in *Warriors and Priests of the Realms*.



## Peldan's Helm

This forester's town of 80-odd folk is home to many rangers, hunters, and woodcutters. It stands as a refuge to all in Beast Country, the perilous western end of Mistledale. The Helm began as the freehold of a retired Cormyrean soldier, Peldan Faern. He chose this spot as his own by driving upright the twohanded sword he had borne in battle into the ground and claiming all the land in sight of his helm, which he had placed atop the sword. Everyone in the Helm claims descent from Peldan now. His helm and sword hang in the rafters of the local meeting hall, which is used at various times for freevote meetings on matters of importance, militia patrol assemblies, and worship services for all woodland and good-aligned faiths.

Peldan's Helm does not present many sites of interest to see: Citizens live in stone cottages surrounded by high, stout stone walls and emerge in large, well-armed bands to plow fields or go into the woods after game or trees to fell. Carving and furnituremaking is done inside the walled yards of the cottages, and strangers are only encouraged to enter if they have business with the folk within.

Despite the Helm's wary nature, many adventurers and game hunters from Cormyr and Sembia seeking wall trophies come here and are welcomed: Every monster slain is one less to menace the folk who spend their lives here. These courageous, hard-working folk are still unable to even stroll in the woods with a loved one without sword in hand and a horn at their belts ready to cry alarm if they are beset by danger too great to overcome or flee from.

Adventurers come here to gain experience in monster-slaying and in hopes they will be among the lucky few to actually find treasure hereabout. Mistshrouded western Mistledale reveals the past more than elsewhere, since farmers to plow the stone relics of old holding walls or the bones of ancient battles away are fewer. The Dale has often been the site of pitched battles over the years, since it is one of the few places in the Dales where armies (especially cavalry) can assemble in large formations without being hemmed in by trees where archers can harass them from concealment. As a result, battle spoil left behind when priests and wizards used earthtwisting spells to bury foes alive or embattled forces buried the fallen in hasty mass graves without stripping bodies for valuables is plentiful. Every spring plowing turns up something of interest and sometimes something of great value - from items of powerful slaying magic to suits of armor or gems and coins seldom seen today.

### Places of Interest in Peldan's Helm

INN & Tavern
The Man With Fire in His Hands

SS BB

The Helm offers citizens and visitors alike just one place to gather, drink, dine, and sleep: the Man With Fire in His Hands. The name of this house commemorates a local (and long-dead) fire-hurling wizard, Murgar. His striking portrait over the bar, in which he is depicted hurling fireballs in all directions, is the only interesting thing in this very average and adequate roadhouse.



# Scardale



travelers' warning: Do not, repeat, do *not* enter the Scar, the gorge of the River Ashaba below Feather Falls. Recently infamous as the

seat of Lashan, the self-styled Ring of the Dales who whelmed an army that rolled over Featherdale, Harrowdale, and Battledale before he was fought to a standstill, Scardale has found disaster again in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR)!

Journeying thence to survey the Dale for this guidebook, I found the towns of Scarsdeep and Chandlerscross had grown from nothing to bustling trading centers since Lashan's defeat. However, word reached me in both of plague! With my own eyes I saw folk fall ill who had recently come from Scardale town fleeing the outbreak—so stay away, lest you join their doomed ranks!

The symptoms are these: Victims first start to shake uncontrollably, a trembling of the limbs that ruins any attempts at the somatic gestures of spellcasting and accuracy with a bow or sling but does not impede movement or speech. This shaking continues until victims perish or are cured.

The disease progresses over a tenday or so, next producing black eruptions or pimples on the lips, then the entire face, the armpits, and the groin. These swell, turn yellow, and burst, weeping fluid freely thereafter. This liquid is a golden, sticky flow that can infect others who touch it. The throats of some victims then become affected at this point, so that they begin an almost ceaseless whimpering from the pain.

Cure disease spells proved initially ineffective against the plague, until someone cast one at the same time as a mage cast *dispel magic* — and the plague fled instantly from the victim. Wizards wiser than I say this can only mean that the affliction is magical as well as physical<sup>1</sup> It may well be a deadly attack from some fell magic-using power bent on scouring Scardale—or perhaps all human lands—of life.

Whatever the cause of the Shaking Plague, its cure can only be effected by two very expensive spells, so most folk are doomed since clergy who serve the common people and the impoverished are spread so thin in the region. Some few people seem to recover on their own, but it must be repeated: I mean some few. Farscrying mages report that the streets and wharves of Scardale are heaped with the dead, and the harbor is choked with floating bodies. (Immersion in water seems to bring some relief from an itching, burning discomfort that accompanies the last stages of the plague.) Lizard men are immune from the malady the watchers say, and are coming up out of Scardale harbor (with more dire things, it is rumored) by the hundreds to slay the few folk left and devour this feast of carrion.

At this time of writing, I am assured that the plague is contained in the Scar and that members of the clergy and mages are working feverishly to eradicate it. Whatever befalls, Scardale is bound to be so changed by this plague from the grimly garrisoned place left behind after Lashan's fall that I cannot describe it in these pages.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: That's me. Mind ye heed: Volo joketh not.



# Shadowdale



hadowdale is probably the most famous of all the Dales thanks to its status as the chosen residence of Elminster the Sage,

Syluné and Storm Silverhand of the Seven Sisters, and the Knights of Myth Drannor—and for the battle that saw the destruction of the avatars of the gods Bane and Mystra! It is also a land known in its own right for its traditional relationships: friendship with the elves and with neighboring Mistledale and enmity and opposition to Zhentil Keep, whose invading armies the vastly outnumbered folk of the Dale have hurled back time and time again.

The most independent and powerful Harpers make pilgrimages to this Dale to meditate on Harpers' Hill and to take training under Storm Silverhand at her farm here. Learned folk and mages travel thence from all over Faerûn for a chance to speak to Elminster, the Old Mage, perhaps the most important archwizard of our time.<sup>1</sup>

I had planned to survey this beautiful farm and woodland Dale in loving detail as befits so important a place. Shadowdale boasts one of the best inns, the Old Skull Inn (established at the foot of the bare rock knoll of the same name), and the most famous fortress, the Tower of Ashaba, in the Dales. The Tower of Ashaba, or Twisted Tower, was

built long ago by drow to guard the exits into what is now Shadowdale from the Underdark—exits some say remain open to this day, though the Zhents the drow traded slaves with are gone!

I had hoped to show you Shadowdale flourishing under the most capable and caring ruler in the Dales, Lord Mourngrym Amcathra, and rising back to strength after the forest-burning battles of the Time of Troubles. I was prevented in this, and here I tell you all why:

As I rode up the MistleTrail to the southern guardpost of Shadowdale, the air around me suddenly hummed and flickered and became blue-white. I felt the stir and surge of strong magic: Then my mount and I were frozen, unable to move. I could only watch helplessly as 'a bright mote appeared in the air before me. It grew swiftly to become a scroll and unrolled to display the words: "Turn back, volothamp Geddarm, and write not of Shadowdale or be feebleminded forever!"

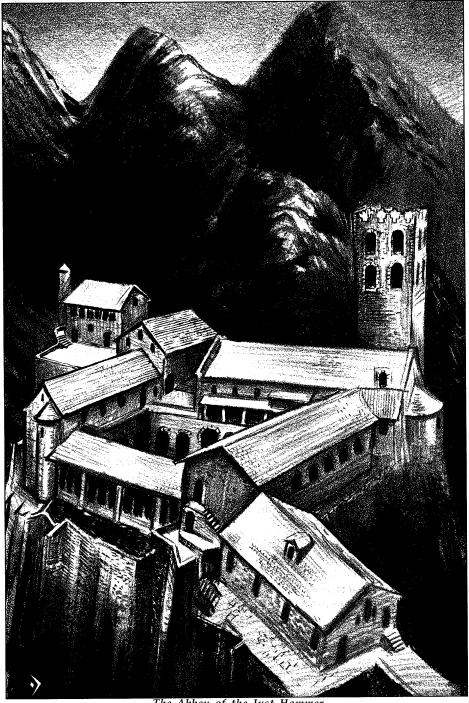
Then the scroll faded, leaving behind only the words, letters of fire floating in the air. The display was impressive, perhaps, but I call such a warning the act of an arrogant churl<sup>2</sup> and will cleave to that opinion to my dying day.<sup>3</sup> Yet, you will find no more of Shadowdale written here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Elminster: Ahem. I'm not going to change my mind, ye know, so ye can drop the flattery at any moment—I've heard better.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: "The act of an arrogant churl"? After the butchery ye've done on the lives and secrets of honest Dalesfolk in these pages, I think not.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elminster: Which need not be all that so far off-if ye catch my drift.





The Abbey of the Just Hammer 198



# Tasseldale



ne of the richest—if not the wealthiest—of all the Dales, Tasseldale is most like the "creeping Sembia" that threatens to swallow it up. In

fact, one sage<sup>1</sup> has called Tasseldale "a cluster of colonies of craftsfolk working for Sembia and trying to be like Sembia—only smaller and nicer." That about sums the land up.

Tasseldale lies in an ancient, gently sloping river valley some 80 miles long and up to 30 miles wide that runs from Arch Wood to the present course of the Ashaba near Blackfeather Bridge. It is a peaceful, prosperous land and was once given over almost entirely to cattle farming after the elves retreated and the land was logged over. Livestock ranches are few these days, though, and are tucked between fruit farms, coppices of straight, thin, polelike trees planted for use in Sembian fences, and the many small tassels (towns) of the Dale. A prominent trail, the Tasselway runs the length of the old river valley but in truth this Dale is crisscrossed by lanes that run in all directions and are crowded every day by foot traffic, riders, pack trains, and wagons going this way and that. Tasseldale is truly the crossroads of the Dales.

Again, travelers from afar may raise their eyebrows at hearing the tassels are towns, when they look very like what would be called a village elsewhere, but "in the Dales, the Dalesfolk rule." In Tasseldale, it would be more accurate to say that Sembia rules: Tasseldale has kept its independence in part because it has always accommodated its larger neighbor and never directly defied or confronted it.

## The Countryside

Tasseldale is comprised of gently rolling grasslands broken by many small coppices, farm hedgerows, and little dells where the Dale's many tinkling streams suddenly cut deep into the ground and then vanish below ground to run unseen in little caves down to join larger streams that eventually empty into the Ashaba. Mists cloak the Dale on most mornings since the nights are clear, still, and cool, and the days are sunny and breezy.

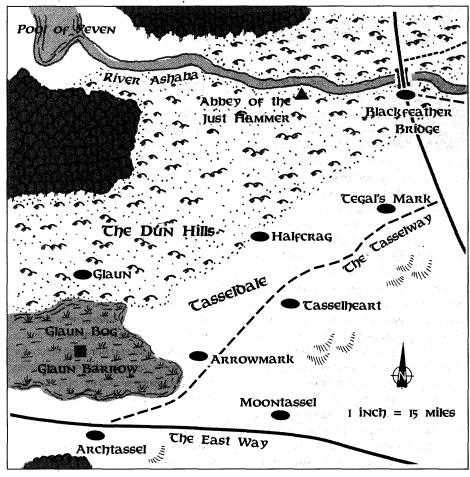
In earlier days, when the land was more open, Tasseldale was where Sembians liked to gallop their horses. Today, though its pastoral beauty remains, Tasseldale is at heart a handful of small cottage settlements where craftsfolk grow old and hunched before their due time from turning out goods for sale in Sembia and overseas. It is the only Dale, in fact, to turn out fine-finished products for export.

The Dun Hills run diagonally across the far northern part of the Dale, forming a buffer between Tasseldale and Battledale in the north, Deepingdale in the west, and part of Featherdale near the Ashaba. Wild ponies and the occasional troll or lurking band of goblinkin roam the Don Hills, but Tassadrans generally consider them safe and find their own ways through them from one side to the other without benefit of guide or guard.

The Glaun Bog squats beneath the southwestern part of the Dun Hills, completing the western separation of Tasseldale from Deepingdale, and easy access between the two Dales is limited to the East Way and the small

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Oraum of Luthcheq, My Travels in the Barbaric Dragon Reach Lands, the Year of the Serpent (1359 DR).





strip of land to either side of it. The Bog has fewer and fewer monsters and brigands these days but remains a dangerous region of quicksand, sinkholes, and carnivorous plants. Most Dalesfolk think of eerie mists and will-o'-wisps when one mentions Glaun Bog and by night, that is exactly what it usually looks like. An evil tomb hill Glaun Barrow, rises at its heart, bestowing some sort of curse on all who disturb it—but some folk of Tasseldale who know their ways around the Bog mine peat, soft coal, and a small amount of poor-quality iron ore in its wet heart and

hunt its reedy ways for waterfowl and game to eat or to sell the pelts of.

## The Tassadrans

The folk known as Tassadrans are a contented lot. They are as well-off in their own ways as the rich Sembians of the south, but they are surrounded by more natural beauty, are pressured by less crowding, and must deal with less crime and dirt. "We have more choices," they like to say when comparing themselves with admittedly richer Sembians.

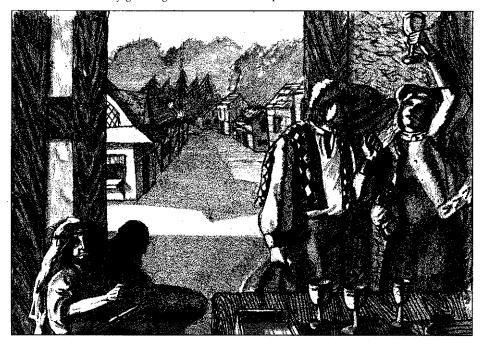


Like all Dalesfolk, their independence is vital to them, but do not throw it in one's face as, say, the folk of Archendale often do. Tassadrans are proud of the skills of their crafts folk, and it is said in the Dales that if someone of Archendale, someone of Mistledale, someone of Shadowdale, and someone of Tasseldale go into the same shop in a far land and see the same ornate pot for sale the Arkhen person will toss it to the floor and break it, the Mistran will check its drainage and size for how well one can grow things in it, the citizen of Shadowdale will dismiss it as "too showy," and the Tassadran will turn it over to look for the maker's mark in hopes of seeing the three joined tassels of Tasseldale. If the Tassadran does not find them, she or he will shrug and say, "We make better than that," and very carefully put it back on the shelf for it is a thing of beauty in its own right and not to be marred.

It is tempting for others to dismiss Tassadrans as faceless money-grubbing folk who

would be bold, brash Sembians if they could afford it, but this would be very wrong. Although it is true that a lot of Sembians have country estates in Tasseldale—country estates that they value highly and keep because they think of them as "quaint" and beautiful and different than their homes back in Sembia—native Tassadrans are brave, cool-headed, patient fighters who see the best way to achieve what is right and then quietly set about doing it,

The mairshars, mounted warriors who defend and police the Dale, are the embodiment of this spirit. Skilled in battle, they are also level-headed judges and peacekeepers who try never to let emotions mar their overriding regard for the long-term peace and safety of their land. They are headed by Grand Mairshar Elizzara Whitehand, an exadventuress who—fittingly for a Tassadran—looks tired and careworn, not proud or complacent.





## The Abbey of The Just Hammer

This prosperous monastic fortress is dedicated to Tyr, Lord of Justice. It nestles on the northwestern flank of a hill known as the Tyrtor in the Dun Hills overlooking the River Ashaba.

The abbey can claim to be the main reason that monsters no longer infest the lands around the Pool of Yeven as they once did. In his younger days, Lord High Justiciar High Avenger Deren Eriach led many clerical battle bands out to scour the land of "unholy beasts." His warriorpriests proudly display a many-tentacled illithid head and a shriveled beholder in their Hall of High Entry (located just inside the forecourt of the Abbey where guests are greeted) and report that even more impressive trophies were stolen by folk who wanted them for "unholy reasons." (I suspect this means that a Cult of the Dragon raid made off with an entire dragon skeleton, judging by the size of the now-empty display plinth.)

Lord High Justiciar Eriach may have a taste for adventure, but he frowns on adventurers, viewing them as a force for lawless chaos to be hindered or even imprisoned if they come within his reach. It is wise to have a signed royal charter from Azoun or a specific writ or contract from a Sembian patron if one ventures west of Blackfeather Bridge along either bank of the Ashaba in an armed band that lacks caravan wagons in its midst.

Fifteen priests serve the One-Handed God here under Lord Deren. They are assisted by as many veteran warriors who are also devout followers of the High Lord of Justice. They follow a stern code of justice and can be judgmental about apparent behavior without knowing the reasons for it. They are, however, willing to apologize and make amends if they mistakenly attack folk they meet. It is best not to make enemies of them if one intends to travel widely in the Dales for they have watchers everywhere.

Lord Deren is not a man very given to changing his mind or permitting exceptions to holy rule (in other words, law-breaking). However, if a clever person can argue law against law or show good and just legal reason why this law does not apply or that law should take precedence, he listens. If convinced, he graciously gives way, uttering his admiration.

"If convinced" is the problem most folk run hard into, because the lord high justiciar has a grasp of legal matters approached by few living beings in Faerûn. He has even instituted an unusual service offered free of charge by the abbey: Instruction in the varying laws and codes of conduct prevalent in the Dragon Reach lands to all who come to the abbey and request it.

By this means, Lord Deren hopes to spread the effective reach of law in the Realms. At home in Tasseldale, he has run into some resistance. He recently instructed the grand mairshar to send all mairshars to him for "proper instruction" in not only Dale laws but in how to enforce them. She crisply told him that justice is easy for priests who sit apart from the real world and that he could do as he had ordered when he was chosen grand mairshar by the people—and not a moment before. He is still composing frosty replies.



## Anchtassel

Archtassel is the only tassel south of the East Way. About 200 folk dwell hard by Arch Wood in this most southwesterly of Tasseldale's tassels.

The folk of Archtassel have always made their living through woodcutting and trapping in Arch Wood, bringing home furs and wood to carve. Locally produced honey-colored fox fur studded with clear rock crystal drops (called "brethyl" fur, though there is really no such animal) has always been highly prized by haughty Sembians for use in trimming their garments. The carvers of Archtassel specialize in relief-cut wood panels for use in walls and doors, often custom-carving them with the heraldic arms of pretentious Sembian clients. They are generally considered by

outsiders to be the best woodcarvers in Tasseldale, though crafters from other tassels (of course) hotly dispute this.

Tasseldale and Archendale have argued over the mere existence of Archtassel since Archtassel's inception. The aggressive Arkhenfolk consider Arch Wood exclusively theirs and have several times shown up in force in the tassel to order its folk to leave "sovereign Arkhen territory." On the last such visit, a passing wizard was so infuriated by the effrontery of the Arkhenfolk that she cast a spell that temporarily paralyzed the right sides of the Arkhen warriors and bid them drop their useless swords and go drag themselves back home.

Though the folk of Archtassel have never abandoned their homes, they have faced more than a few suspicious brigand raids that came out of nowhere and—so





local Tassadrans claim - must have been Arkhen-sponsored. Some time ago some tassel trappers vanished in Arch Wood, and locals blame Archendale for their presumed deaths. Angry talk has been going around since about raising a force to wipe out an Arkhen logging camp near where the trappers disappeared, but so far, talk is all that has occurred. The mairshars have ordered the local townspeople to settle down and discuss their options for a while more. It is thought that rather than confronting Archendale in battle, Tasseldale may hire a few unscrupulous adventuring bands to practice being "brigands" on Arkhenfolk near Arch Wood.

Given that history, travelers might expect to find a fortalice in or at least earth ramparts around this tassel, but nothing like that exists. Archtassel is just a stand of trees with lanes snaking in and out around the many small cottages that nestle under the branches. Folk from the nearby East Way who want to trade easily find an open area that has been set aside for parking wagons, a handpump well ready for their use, and a bell they can ring to signal their arrival to anyone who might want to come out and trade. The tassel features an assortment of craft shops and a lone inn.

### Places of Interest in Archtassel Inn

Baeremar's Stargirt Stallion

This nice but unremarkable inn is small and cramped but has splendid views of the tassel out its windows and fresh soup every morn—a delightful smell to wake

up to. Craft items made by the folk of Archtassel are displayed (and for sale) on every shelf and lintel, and the inn has a bathing pool out back that is spellwarded against insects where staff and guests alike gather on hot evenings to soak and chat.

Exotic teas (one has sweetened cocoa from Maztica dissolved in it!) are the order of the day here, and the staff also make bite-sized biscuits that are split and spread with a variety of weird-looking green pastes made of mixtures of local herbs and vegetables with butter or soft cheese. These taste nicer than they look, but many guests prefer more robust fare. For them, the inn staff bake fowl in clay jackets in an oven—delicious!

Only about a dozen guests can sleep here: It is obvious the locals banded together to build this inn when they got tired of travelers on the East Way asking for rooms for the night. The inn does not see heavy use, and locals often drop by to chat with the staff or take over the lounge for impromptu meetings—usually to discuss joint craft ventures with a Sembian agent.

The name of the inn, echoed in its magnificent relief-carved signboard whose "stars" (actually just bumps in the wood) are enchanted so as to glow and sparkle, commemorates a local legend. Supposedly, long ago, a warrior escaped marauding orcs or folk from Archendale (versions of the tale differ) after a brave battle in which his beloved, a mage, was slain. She cast a dying spell of stars on his mount that enabled it, trailing little motes of light, to leap across a lake. The lake lay just west of the tassel, but it has long since dried up.



### Arrowmark

This small place of about 120 folk lies northeast of Archtassel, just off the Tasselway. It is the forgotten tassel of the Dale; even many Tassadrans forget about its existence. The bowyers and fletchers of this tassel do very fine work, and in Cormyr and even in distant reaches of Faerûn one should always examine a graywing (goose feather) shaft near its tip for a tiny spiral with an arrow through its heart—the mark used by the folk here to identity their work.

Like Archtassel, this tassel takes the form of cottages clustered in the shade of a stand of trees and has no landmarks or religious sites. Unlike its neighboring tassel, it does have an arrow-straight main street that is sometimes used by locals to test how far and true their new bow or new arrow design can fly. Beware when walking down the street: The sound of a triple chime means that archery is imminent. All homes in this tassel have such a chime, and the repeated ringing of it summons the tassel's inhabitant to assemble in the main street, armed and ready to repel an attack.

## Places of Interest in Arrowmark

Unique Sites
The Gray Lady's Ruins

Near Arrowmark on the edge of the Glaun Bog are some overgrown elven ruins. Even most elves do not recall who dwelt there or what befell the inhabitants. The stones are generally considered to be the home of the most notorious resident of Arrowmark: the Gray Lady.

The Gray Lady is the seldom-seen phantom of a gowned elven maiden who flees westward screaming silently through the Dale on summer evenings. She always passes down the main street of Arrowmark – though her consistent detours through some homes and shops suggest that the road may have traversed a slightly different course in her time - and heads for the ruins, where she simply fades away. Folk whom she passes through are chilled to the bone and often swoon on the spot, but suffer no lasting ill effects except receiving a disturbing handful of visions of what the Arrowmark area was like long ago. These vivid mental scenes stay with their recipients for years and sometimes point the way to exactly where elven treasures lie in the Lady's ruins.

From fragments of different folk's visions after her passage, people have pieced together some of the Lady's story: The Gray Lady was ridden down and horrifically killed long ago by greedy human reavers from what later became Sembia. The ruins she was vainly fleeing to were among very few stone buildings known to have been used by elves of the time and are thought to have harbored much magic. Treasure—often exquisitely beautiful filigree-and-gems elven jewelry, but sometimes magical items—has-indeed been occasionally found in these ruins.

### Shops

### The Sheathed Dagger

Caravan Shipping Silks, Dyes, Spices, and Exotic Knickknacks



Despite its sinister name, this is not a wild tavern or a thieves' brotherhood, though some Tassadrans who have bought wares



from the owners may disagree with that. Rather, this place is an outpost of a Selgaunt-based trading coster of the same name. Through their factor (their agent), Darnar Presnyl, they sell imported silks, dyes, spices, and fancy knickknacks from the wealthy homes of Sembia.

### The Old Archer's Eye

Bowyer and Fletcher Collective



This building smells pleasantly of cedar and various oils and varnishes. The Eye is a trading collective set up by the best of the local bowyers and fletchers so that they are not interrupted in their work by a constant stream of buyers wanting a particular bow or asking them to "make me one like this only black and about eight feet high, eh?" Within the Eye, the work of each crafter is clearly identified and set in its own glass case, which is carefully cooled by a floor-treadle fan when necessary to prevent warping.

Expect to pay 125 gp and up for any bow, and 1 sp each for a war or hunting arrow here. Custom bows can be ordered if buyers can stay in town for the bowyer to test his work on them as the bows are made, but all such items cost at least 200 gp.

## Taverns I Shot an Arrow

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This tavern is an inexpensive, rustic place decorated with helms transfixed by arrows, shields transfixed by arrows, pieces of armor transfixed by arrows, and other quaint trophies of archery used in anger. The locals seem to have fairly low

standards in beer and no liking for wine at all, judging by what is offered here, but the places does serve robust zzar and (surprisingly) has a nice selection of brandies, liqueurs, and cordials. The peach smoothwater is especially fine, though locals swear by the fiery—and far more expensive—rubyfire.

Most craftsfolk in town drift over here for a quiet drink after work or during highsunfest too exhausted to appreciate revelry or brawling. They all rise together, though, to eject any visitor who grows too loud or belligerent. Bards sometimes harp quietly in the background here, but folk do not dance on tables in a rowdy manner or conduct sing-alongs as one sees elsewhere.

### INN

The Stag That Got Away

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This quiet, good inn is a labyrinth of dark passages and old, but exquisite, carved wood panels. As one might expect from the inn's name, leaping stags are carved everywhere, even on the seat of the men's jakes. (I did not examine the ladies' for obvious reasons of discretion.) Rooms are furnished in old, rather shabby luxury, but service is almost nonexistent. The staff members get the room ready before one arrives and clean it again after one leaves. Between those two times, one sees nothing of them. The one delightful, small surprise about the place is that one back door leads into a delightful, overgrown, little rose garden with a tiny fishpond and even a bower for the amorously inclined. The Stag provides safe, clean, and perfectly adequate - but unexciting accommodations.



### GLaun

By a hair the westernmost of the tassels, Glaun sits in a fold of the Dun Hills, a bowl-shaped valley often overhung by the tattered smokes of its smelters. About 370 folk call Glaun their home. The town is a busy, happy one, whose crafters make steady coin turning the pig iron the Black Axe Ironworks turns out into lanterns, cold-wrought railings, scrollwork shelf brackets, and other decorative ironwork for sale around the Dales. Glaun, in fact, is a settlement that grew up around the truly ugly Black Axe Ironworks, which was founded by the dwarf Irythn Darrtar after the death of Glaun the Smith.

Glaun was a human smith who set up his shop here more than two centuries ago after discovering iron ore in the Glaun Bog that lies to the south of the tassel. This treacherous mire is known best by a dozen or so aging guides who dwell here. They lead teams of younger people (some say by long and roundabout ways so that only the guide in the end knows where they are or how they got there) to cut peat or retrieve coal for use in the smelter fires and to bring out the iron ore that the tassel's wealth is built on.

Perytons and wyverns have in the past been problems in the Dun Hills, but they all seem to be gone now. One of the last of the wyverns was slain by a huge lance made locally and fired into the sky over Glaun by a gigantic ballista. The slain creature crushed a cottage in its fall, and the locals all agree that they did not like the taste of the wyvern meat that everyone cut off and took home to try.

Trolls, goblinkin bands, and the occasional brigand are all that trouble folk in

the Hills now, but they are enough for Glaun mothers to forbid their younglings to go sling hunting for rabbits and grouse on the slopes above the tassel.

## Places of Interest in Glaun

Unique Sites
The Wyvernspike

Rising like an abbey spire from the center of the bowl-shaped valley is a rusting black iron spire at the center of the open marketplace. On this iron spire the folk of Glaun have always set out their battle trophies, from captured Arkhen raiders in chains to peryton and swamp monsters. The last group of Arkhen ruffians chained out here withered in the sun for days until the Swords of Archendale reluctantly surrendered a fat ransom fee for them; a fee, it is reported, that they were immediately set to earning back through indentured labor to their Dale.

The bones of the last wyvern in the Dun Hills can still be seen on the Wyvern-spike's flanks today, dangling in disarray from drying sinews. The wyvern was hauled up and transfixed here after its death over a season ago, and the Glauntans seem content to leave it there forever—or until the next foe to cross them comes along.

# **Shops**Black Axe Ironworks

Iron Smelter Collective

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This evil-smelling, dirty, littered yard and smelter is the heart of Glaun. All the local crafters get their iron from here. Since the unfortunate death of Galatar the Greedy, the last private owner of the



place, who decided to increase his prices tenfold and later the same evening somehow mysteriously went out on a catwalk he had never set foot on before and fell into the main melting vat below, they have collectively owned the Ironworks. This ensures low, steady, and fair prices for all so that Glauntan crafters can plan each season ahead of time.

Outsiders are not generally welcome to buy iron here for fear of slighting the supply to local folk. Exceptions are made for those willing to pay four times the usual price or more. Such windfall profits are divided equally among all the crafters, not pocketed by the Ironworks staff.

### Dreshen's Tack and Harness

Tack, Harness, Wagon and Caravan Equipment

This shop is generally considered the best source of elaborate multiple-wagon harnesses in all the Dales. Aldo Dreshen sells crude but rugged wagons, spare wheels, feed, saddles, tack, and harness, and continually wishes business were more brisk. "I am starving," he moans, "Starving! And if I had married, all my little children would be starving, too!"

### The Tasselway Coster

Caravan Shipping, Tin Work, and Assorted Foodstuffs

This informal and locally popular operation is owned and operated by the Drasden brothers, Beritar and Thag, a pair of weathered, cheerful, pranksome ex-adventurers. They run small, fast caravans along the East Way, taking ale,

tin work, pewter goods, wool, salted meat, grain, fruit, and cheese from Tasseldale to Arabel for sale to the shops and merchants there. More than once they have escorted young Sembian ladies and men who were running away from home along on their journeys without troubles and without asking any awkward questions. More than one happy Sembian-born couple, now dwelling far from the strictures of home, fondly regards Beritar and Thag as honorary uncles.

# Tavern The Thirsty Pig

This house's name refers to pig iron, not a thirsty beast. It is a dim, strong-smelling place where workers reeking of sweat and the smoke of the Ironworks sit and drink the hot dust out of their throats before staggering home to sleep. Rowdiness is neither appreciated nor often encountered, but good cheer, conversation, and minstrelry are not much in evidence, either. Drinking seems to be serious business in Glaun.

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The House in the Smoke

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This accurately named place is not one I can recommend. It stands too close to the clangs and curses of the Ironworks for any but the determinedly deaf to get a good night's sleep. Average prices bring one lackluster food and rather sparse and rudely furnished, dingy rooms—but, of course, it is the only inn in town.



## Halfcrag

This small, isolated village of less than 200 folk is the largest farming center in the Dales and the only tassel with its own mounted defense force: the Crag Strikers. They serve to run off brigands, wolves, leucrotta, and other predators that come down out of the Dun Hills after the local sheep, goats, and cattle. They also herd those same valuable animals where they are wanted, either to market in Tasselheart or away from heavily grazed areas that the Halfcrag farmers are trying to reseed.

Halfcrag gets its name from its defensible site: It sits atop a flat-topped "half crag"<sup>2</sup> that stands a little way out from the main Dun Hills range. The tassel today is a cramped cluster of tall, thin homes separated by narrow, winding lanes. Space is so short atop the crag that from a distance the tassel resembles a single structure—a strangely unwarlike castle that is perched high atop the half crag's rocky base.

Troubles with brigands, goblinkin, and even Arkhenfolk in the past have made the people of Halfcrag very cautious about hiding their wealth, and the soft rock in the center of the crag itself has given them the ideal solution. This community rests atop many trapped, undead-guarded underground vaults, whose precise whereabouts and access are concealed behind cryptic rhymes known only to family members, false fireplace walls, and ceiling trapdoors above the canopies of canopy beds. In earlier days, priests of Myrkul took handsome fees from the Halfcrag folk for bringing enthralled undead into such hiding places. These days, the purchase of helmed horrors or

shadowy guardian creatures crafted in certain secretive cellars in Sembia has largely replaced the use of undead because priests of Kelemvor want to set the undead to rest and other evil priest-hoods are trusted by Halfcraggers about as far as they can be thrown by a small lad or lass.

This cautious fortress mindset has made Halfcraggers very reluctant to allow outlanders—even other Tassadrans—up onto the crag. The mairshars have recently had to issue several crisp reminders to the folk of Halfcrag that *all* Tassadrans must be welcome anywhere in Tasseldale.

The market hall, caravan campground, and pavilions are located at the foot of the crag itself in a compound. Guests may sleep in the pavilions with a roof over their heads and water, privies, and firewood free at hand, but Halfcrag has no inn or tavern yet, though it seems some locals plan to build one of each soon. This visitor area at the crag's foot is overlooked by a ballista tower on the crag above and enclosed by earthen ramparts. (The ballista is firmly in the control of the mairshars.) The stables of the volunteer Crag Strikers are also located in this area alongside a paddock used by Halfcraggers to show off their stock to visiting buyers.

Halfcrag exports live animals, barrels of salted meat, wool, and rather spicy, greasy sausages favored by those who cook over open fires because they fry well. If visitors do not come here to buy such things, there is not much to see — unless they are of a mind to explore the Dun Hills, in which case they should be sure to look up Romantic Dreams Forays.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Elminster: What ye would call a mesa.



### Places of Interest in Halfcrag

Unique Sites
Romantic Dreams Forays

Romantic Dreams Forays is a business run by a band of semiretired and very beautiful female human and half-elven adventurers. They charge stiff fees to patrons—usually bored, wealthy Sembians—who want a taste of adventure.

After patrons participate in a day of languid weapons practice and being fitted with equipment in a steep-sided dell hidden from view of Halfcrag, the Foray guides get patrons pleasantly tipsy around a campfire and tell chilling tales of the dangers of the Dun Hills. Then, in the chill of early dawn, the company rides up along the most scenic trails the Foray ladies could find or make into the heart of the loftiest hills.

There the brave force finds ample monster tracks—thoughtfully placed there the day before by some of the Foray guides—before battling a wing-clipped stirge and a devenomed snake, which were also set in place earlier. Then the victorious band retires to a hidden pond for a swim and a leisurely highsun meal accompanied, if the patrons are sufficiently attractive, by some flirtation—"That is the 'dreams' part," Anjanna of the Foray ladies told me.

When rested, the Foray force arranges the monster trophies it has obtained on the bands saddles for a triumphal return to the base of the crag. This is followed by a group exploration of the crumbling ruins of an old keep. There the band finds a handful of gold coins scattered among the bones of fallen warriors on a stair—right where a Foray guide left them the

day before. Then a prepared spell causes a ghostly image to menace the party, and the Foray lady guides grimly order their patrons back, since, in their words, "we have not the magic to defeat a deathghost."

As the mythical deathghost is an illusion that ignores holy turning attempts, it would seem they are right, so the heroes retreat—only to be swooped at by a lowflying, snarling wyvern (more illusion magic) before emerging into a valley where no less than 16 masked brigands yell a challenge and charge. The desperate outlaws never seem to catch up with the fleeing party, and the Foray band comes galloping back to the crag campground, breathless, in time for evenfeast.

Some patrons come back time and time again for this fun, and I am sure they know it is all faked, but they do not seem to mind. The fee is 50 gp a head in advance, but if someone the ladies recognize signs up, they do try to vary the excitements. Of course, sometimes real monsters, observing the regular movement of prey along a set route, do join in. The Foray staff members still talk about the time a pair of firedrakes pounced on them, badly wounding one of the female adventurer guides, and their bored Sembian patrons roared into battle, slaughtering the beasts with reckless flair.

I was assured by Tanatha of the Foray ladies that they always carry plentiful potions of hearing and elixirs of health, and they also have a robe of useful items along. When I suggested that telling me about this magic could bring them danger from thieves, she smiled thinly and told me that anyone who thought the Foray guides were just pretty women in daring armor would be very unpleasantly surprised.



## Moontassel

Named for its proximity to the vanished Moondale (which is now Ordulin and its outlands, located in the heart of the Sembian interior), this large, prosperous tassel is a sprawling town of craftsfolk. Its bold signs advertise blown-glass, life-sized mermaids that one can pump colored water through, custom-made chimes that play complete tunes, and much more such ostentatious nonsense. It comes as no surprise to most travelers to learn that this tassel is where most sheltered city Sembians go to shop in the "quaint Dales" and pick up a useless, pretty little something for the third parlor and an uglier useless something to give Aunt Myrthel when she visits.

Moontassel has certainly changed from the quiet, pretty place of my last visit, and choosing places to sleep, drink, and be entertained is now difficult in this everything-goes town, so I have selected just one inn and one tavern for abbreviated entries: the Lunge tavern and the Boar and Lion inn. The only landmark in this noisy chaos of high commercialism ("Get your dragon weathervanes here! All types-we'll paint 'em the color of your choice! Each with a genuine dragon scale on it!") and unregulated building sprawl is a ring road at Moontassel's center. It encloses some high stone walls within which can be seen the tops of many rather ragged trees. These stone walls in turn enclose the haunted ruins of Moontassel.

Places of Interest IN Moontassel Unique Sites Haunted Ruins of Moontassel Visitors to Moontassel quickly notice that the walls around the haunted ruins have no gate or door. There is no way to enter them except by climbing or flying. Getting caught climbing brings one a hook down with a mairshar's peace pole and a 6 gp fine on the spot—or an unfed night in jail if one does not have the funds.

Inside the wall stand the remnants of a small school of wizardry that was blasted apart in a battle with rival mages long ago. The ruins were stripped of all magic that could safely be taken away before the wall was put up, and adventurers are warned that the wall has been sited so as to enclose a wild magic area created in the battle. The wild magic area, reports go, does not extend all the way down into the cellars of the riven school. Where it ends, strange automatons controlled by a lich who lurks somewhere in the deepest part of the old school can be found.

Although they do not go in after explorers, mairshars look poorly on wholesale attempts to dig up the ruins. They stand guard to relieve such curiosity-seekers of anything they bring out when they exit. A shadowy, sinister local network of Dragon Cultists watches for forays into the ruins and *does* follow adventurers in, trying to slay them and seize all treasure they have found or brought in, so beware of any convenient aid a stranger suddenly offers to someone in the ruins.

### Shops

With so many shops to choose from, I have found it hard to select a few for the traveler's interest. In addition to those below, people following in my footsteps to Moontassel should investigate Iyldro's Fine Paperworks, a fledgling business in its first tenday when I visited the tassel.



# The Dancing Death Knight Adventuring Supplies

5 5 5 5 5

A striking bit of *programmed illusion* work makes the name of this shop come vividly to life four or five times a day. If one stops by at the right time, it is worth seeing the skeletal figure in black armor twist and gyrate through the air. It is certainly the only *safe* way to ever see a death knight up close!

This shop caters to the would-be adventurer, selling both new and used weapons; gear of all sorts, running from mountaineering equipment to iron maidens; armor; and—in the yard out back—guaranteed monster cages. How one collects on a failed guarantee was something the staff seemed reluctant to discuss.

I was served by a young lady wearing one of the shop's disguise masks, a rubbery thing that gives a person the features of someone else. She was also wearing a truly incredible breastplate, all wicked-looking spikes and cutouts to show her bronzed ribs beneath. Her ribs were also adorned with glowing rune patches meant to look impressive for the Sembian clientele and scare folk and monsters alike away with her demonstrated "mastery of magic" (even if in truth she knew none). Of course, similar tempo rary "rune tattoos" are on sale in the shop.

Among all the gimmicks is a thorough range of things adventurers might need, a selection of exotic spell components; and some hard-to-find items. Everything was for sale here from tents and folding boats to monster-head masks and skins, from jars of dragon bone dust and real bug larvae, to



Iyldro's Fine Paperworks (A Fledging Moontassan Business)



shark cages to lower adventurers into dangerous places but keep monsters at bay The availability of such rarely encountered items on the shelf, rather than as custom-made or specially acquired items, *may* make adventurers in a hurry willing to pay the eyebrowraising prices—or not. During my visit, six patrons made purchases, and I heard six variations on: "What?! Ye jest, surely!"

## **Ruirmorn's Silks and Linens** *Textiles, Bed Linens, and Carpets*



This company, operated by the warrior Ruirmorn, a somewhat sinister and mysterious man, imports Sembian textiles and silks from the east. This shop is the best place to look for bargain prices on such wares. (Carpets with bloodstains on them go very cheap.)

### Tavern The Lunge



Most taverns in Moontassel are horribly overpriced places where wildly costumed Sembians parade to show off their daring to other wildly costumed Sembians. The Lunge caters to the traveler on a budget. This dimly lit taproom has curtained booths for the use of professional escorts entertaining guests. (The escorts rent the booths; they are not on staff.) It keeps the main floor area for simple drinking and conversation. Dancing and minstrelry are for more expensive places.

A full range of beverages can be had here, but beware the Old Smooth Throat whisky: The tavern's animated signboard depicting a lunging swordsman can look pretty threatening after one has had a glass of this stuff.

#### lnn

The Boar and Lion



A fee of 13 sp per head per night brings visitors excellent food and service at the Boar and Lion—perhaps the best in town. Regulars know this, so the Lion is always crowded. It was once a tavern along with being an inn, but the taproom and dance floor were needed to make more guest rooms, so no common drinking room exists anymore. Guests in the Lion find narrow halls, blessed silence (thanks to good spells), and meals served in their room on covered platters; there is no space to spare in the Lion for a dining room or parlor, either.

The Lion rises five floors from the street. All rooms are furnished with knotted climbing ropes for use in escaping fires. In my experience, they are most often used to bring unpaid guests up to sleep or for other business and then to let them out again before morning.

### Festhall Five Wanton Witches

\* \* \* \*

This place is named for its owners, five exotic dancers from Sembia who do a false magic act as the climax of every night's show, It features lots of flashes, colored smoke, and vanishing parts of costumes. (Yes, I admit I stomped and whistled like everyone else.) A lot of the fun here consists of pouring beer or wine over other patrons and then plunging into heated pools to wash it off again—along with lots of other friendly people. In sum, the Wanton Witches is a rowdy, mindlessly fun place.



## Tasselheart

This fast-growing tassel stands near the center of the Dale. There has even been talk of moving the mairshar headquarters to Tasselheart because of its more centralized location. Thus far the folk of Tegal's Mark have cried "Tradition!" and won the day; however, the talk never dies down.

Though Tasselheart was once just a trail-moot, it is now the site of the Dale's large, tenday-long Midsummer Market, at which folk from all over the Dale come to meet, gossip, and trade goods. "Inexpensive good value" seems to be the day-to-day order of things in Tasselheart. Its folk show a kindly, open, caring spirit that makes travelers come back year after year to embrace innkeepers in the street with glad cries. In short, it is a place worth stopping at.

### Landmarks

The only landmark in Tasselheart is the great open Midsummer Meadow, a grassy plateau that the ring-shaped tassel is built around. Used as a playing field and grazing area, it is overrun (there is no better word) by the merchants who suddenly set up stalls for the Midsummer Market each year here, staking their claims for good spots in a brawling, underhanded process now policed by the mairshars to avoid bloodshed.

Travelers are free to camp in the meadow if it is not Midsummer Market time. Fires there are strictly forbidden, though, and an untroubled sleep may prove elusive. Bands of local youths play pranks on each other and anyone else who is up here at night, and the meadow is also the local trysting place. Reports tell that a doppleganger took advantage of all this fun in the dark to slay several people

last year. It got clean away, so it may still be lurking in the area or even impersonating a local Tassadran!

### Places of Interest in Tasselheart Shops

**Thorik Rivenrock's Ores**Precious and Utilitarian Metal Ores

5 5 5 5

This small coster is owned by Thorik's six sons: Jarvik, Holorun, Iltzimmer, Darguth, Blundrik, and Saram. Their now-dead father was a dwarf of no small reputation in Tasselheart, for he led several hastily assembled Tassadran forces to victory over Sembian bands who seemed determined, at the time, to forcibly add the lands of Tasseldale to Sembia. The sons continue the work that made their father rich: bringing metals bought in Cormyr and Archendale to the crafters of a Dale that has no mines or known ore lodes (not counting the poor iron ore in the Glaun Bog).

The leader is the burly, outgoing Jarvik Thorsson, who dreams of reopening the rich mines of lost Sessrendale. He blames pig-headed Arkhen aggression for slowing the growth of Tasseldale. If he meets an Arkhen man alone and there are no witnesses about, he tries to lay serious fear of Tassadrans into the Arkhen man with his fists. ("One less born troublemaker," he will grunt afterward).

The coster is beginning to hire adventuring bands to probe those lost Sessrendale mines for them, but they warn all the folk they hire to beware of Arkhen spies. They fear Arkhen forces will occupy the barren former Sessrendale just to keep its ores out of the hands of others—namely, themselves.





# Tavern The Addertongue

!! DD

This rowdy, dangerous alehouse is frequented by a lot of hireswords and layabouts looking for work and a reputation, so brawls are frequent and can be deadly. All races are tolerated in here—I even saw a well-armed orc once—and the drink is cheap. This tavern is not a place, though, to try to conduct private business or to relax—even for an instant.

### INN The Tasselway Arms

!!! bbb

A stay at the Tasselway Arms only costs 7 sp per head per night, and stabling and a

good evenfeast meal are thrown in, so the Arms is widely used by Tassadrans traveling in their own land. It is nothing spectacular, but rather a good, solid, family-run inn that caters to families, honest merchants, and folk of peaceful intent and manners.

The Arms is owned by a mairshar and his son is another mairshar. They make sure that all guests see their badges and uniform tabards as they go in and out of the inn on business so that folk who may be trouble do not even think of stopping here. By and large, this strategy works. Potentially rowdy-looking guests who are not perturbed by their badges may well hear this greeting: "Adventurers, eh? I'll expect your best behavior, now, or you'll be relocated down the street to the warmest room in the jail! Enjoy your stay, now!"



## Tegal's Mark

Tegal's Mark is a pretty place that folds around two wooded hills located amid verdant vegetable farms. From afar one can see its three major landmarks: two grand houses that share the crest of Tegal's Hill and an old watchtower. The Mark is not much larger than the other tassels (only 440 or so folk dwell here), but it is the seat of Tasseldale's government and—to non-Tassadrans—probably the best-known tassel.

The Mark was founded almost 200 years ago by Tegal, a human swordsmith. The blades that came out of his forge and swordworks were so eagerly sought after that a village of metalcrafters, polishers, scabbardmakers and the like quickly grew up around it. The future tassel was called



Tegal's Mark after the "T" mark with a forked tail where the tails curl off to the left that Tegal engraved on all his work.

### Places of Interest in Tegals Mark Unique Sites The Sharburg

The fortified base of the mairshars is an old watchtower rising out of a much more recently built walled compound. The compound sports a council hall for the grand mairshar) the mairshars' barracks, and a stable. The Dale armory and main dungeons are in the tower.

This was once the site of an elven watchtower. Legends say that someone who utters the right words can summon into being a door in midair here that leads to an elven safehold crammed with weapons and magic.

### The Temper Pond

Long used by the Tegal smiths to temper their weapons in, this clear, cool pond is the local swimming hole. It is also supposedly where the notorious highwayman Buren the Black Mask hid the gems he stole from the throats of dozens of different fine Sembian ladies on the roads.

### Residences Elgaun Manor

This grand, many-windowed manor is the summer home of a wealthy Sembian merchant family who spend their winters in their home city of Yhaunn. Here they read, bath in their own indoor pool, and hire mages to delight them with illusions and minstrels to move them with music. They often throw parties that bring splendidly garbed Sembians to the Mark for a few nights of abandoned revelry spiced up with the occasional murder, some pranks, and one or two accidents. The grand mairshar has asked to be warned beforehand of all future festivities, and the family has agreed to this-the highlight of their last party-two flying rival mages furiously trading fireballs over Tegal's Hill in anger - was as much a surprise to them as it was to all the Markenfolk.

### Theremondivyr's House

This small but impressive house and garden is home to the timid scholar, sage, and wizard Theremondivyr, a law-abiding type who spends his time in quiet studies. He delights in helping folk answer lore queries with his researches—but is a fan of adventurers and aids them with an eagerness that overcomes his usual nervous, retiring ways.



Recently he helped the Suzailan adventurers known as Not Just Any Reckless Blades, and these rich nobles' sons were so grateful to him for saving their lives that they sent a crew of war wizards to put a few defenses around the kindly old sage's tower. Though he does not know it, a *gate* from the palace in Suzail was also erected so that they can step right in to visit when they want to see him again—or a war wizard can swiftly get near to northern Sembia.

Theremondivyr was very grateful, and his fees to them are forever waived, but his fees to everyone else have risen as he grows more confident. He would still like to see folks who want to hire a wizard for something not too dangerous, and not too political, though.

### Shrine

### The Scattered Seeds

The local shrine to Chauntea is a domed building whose upper windows are inset with colored glass so that sunlight forms impressive moving patterns on the marble floor. A fountain and garden grow up from in the center of the shrine. The garden is tended and the fountain kept clear and clean by three worshipers, but no priests dwell here.

The shrine is open to all who wish to shelter here. In all the years it has been open, it has only once been vandalized, and it is thought that passing worshipers of Talos did that.

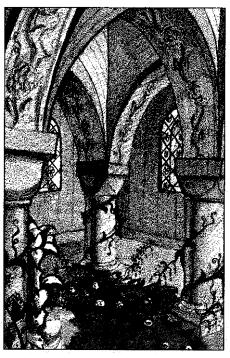
### Shops

Aladiam's Imports

Spices, Silks, and Exotics

3 8 8

This small, pleasant shop is crammed with spices and silks brought in from Sembia. It



is fairly open local knowledge that its proprietor, the retired Calishite adventurer Aladiam, is a smuggler and fence of stolen goods—and that he can defend himself with a *scimitar of speed* and some invisible guardian creature that once tore apart three Sembians who angrily confronted him about some missing property. Aladiam always tries to hire any adventurers he sees to just "take these small things to my cousin Daljav in Selgaunt." He always claims this is very urgent, and once the adventurers set out and find angry folk on their trail, they may well agree about the urgency. . . .

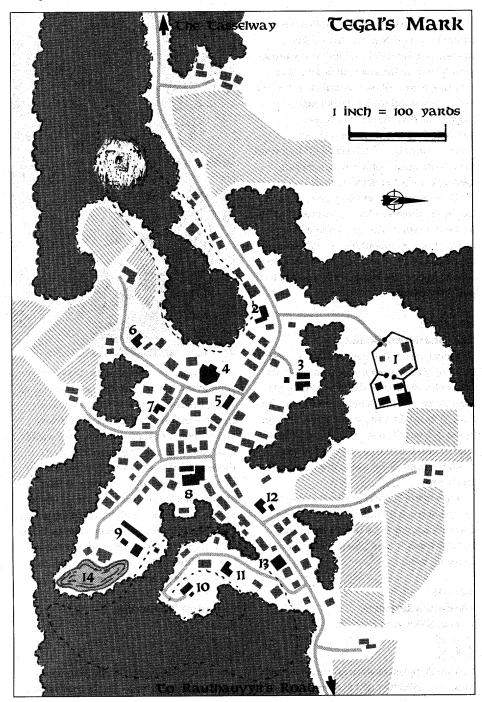
### Grenden Toymaker

Toys



Grenden is a friendly, kindly man who loves to play with toys. He often gets down







### Tegal's Mark Map Key

- The Sharburg (mairshar tower, including a council hall, barracks, a stables, an armory, and dungeons)
- **2.** Aladiam's Imports (exotic imports shop)
- **3.** The Red Wyvern Company (merchant coster headquarters)
- 4. The Sword and Sash (festhall)
- **5.** The Royal Flagon (tavern)
- Tormel Cabinetmaker (fine furniture shop)
- 7. Grenden Toymaker (toymaker and toy shop)
- 8. The Markhouse (inn)
- **9.** Tegal Swordsmiths (weaponmaking workshop)
- **10.** Elgaun Manor (wealthy Sembian family summer home)
- **11.** Theremondivyr's House (wizard/sage residence)
- **12.** Turnell's Provisions (prepared foodstuff and hardware shop)
- **13.** The Scattered Seeds (shrine to Chauntea)
- 14. The Temper Pond

on his knees to show a child how this warrior jumps or how that wind-up dragon flaps its wings. He is truly happy when someone buys a toy for a child.

His shop holds many wonderful toys, including a few brass and glass imports meant for grown folk to admire, but mainly clever, sturdy wooden moving toys' of Grenden's own making. He makes everyday toys that might be sneered at it in sophisticated cities, but children the Realms over would have fun playing with one should it fall into their hands.

I always buy some toys here to give away as gifts on my travels—and so should you. I have even seen the great Elminster give

some away from time to time.<sup>3</sup> Toys of Grenden's own making are 1 cp to 6 gp; the imports go up to 212 gp for the lifesized armored knight.

### The Red Wyvern Company

Caravan Shipping, Textiles, and Smelted Metals

This outpost of a Sembian merchant coster based in Ordulin imports bolts of cloth and bars of smelted metal into Tasseldale for sale to crafters. It is known for its large wagons, fast drivers, and rude employees. No one argues right of way on a road with Red Wyvern wagons except mairshars, adventurers, and fools. The drivers of such wagons tend to be handy with hurled knives.

### **Tegal Swordsmiths**

Swordsmiths

The descendants of Tegal's original apprentices have become the largest weaponmakers in the Dales, and in nearby Sembia they have acquired an almost legendary reputation for strong, durable blades that hold their temper even in dragonfire<sup>4</sup> and have a nice heft and balance. They also sell for hefty prices, and thieves are warned that all of the nine smiths and 14 apprentices working here can hold their own in a fray and have magic to prevent any passing wizard from emptying the swordworks of all its goodly blades. Moreover, some of the blades are said to be able to defend themselves.<sup>5</sup>

Only the smiths have the right to put Tegal's mark (the mark described at the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Elmister: Listen up! Shush, blast ye! Can't a person have any secrets?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Elminster: Do not go trying this, now

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Elminster: Coy, isn't he? Why not just say they are animated, intelligent blades? (Sigh.)



beginning of the section on this tassel) on anything, and the best Tegal smith is generally acknowledged to be Jalissa Two-hammers. She often makes blades for wizards to enchant for a cost of 300 gp and up, depending on the type of blade. She tends to be booked up for about three years in advance. The half-elven female Tegal smith Vaerdalee, I am told, is almost her equal.

#### Tormel Cabinetmaker

Fine Furniture

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Tormel is considered perhaps the finest furnituremaker in all the Dales. Folk in Cormyr, Sembia, and even Impiltur collect his seat chests (traveler's strongchests finished luxuriantly enough to double as seating in grandly furnished rooms), armoires, and dressers. Tormel is old and semiretired now, and his son Senn is a bit of a lackwit, though he does beautiful scrollwork. As new Tormel pieces grow scarcer, the pre-



sent prices of 100 gp a piece and up are sure to rise. Tormel's mark is a "T" inside a circle in the shape of a snake biting its own tail.

#### Turnell's Provisions

Prepared Foodstuffs and Small Hardware Oddments

5 5 5 5

Turnell's is the closest thing in the Mark to a general store. It offers prepared sauces and foods not made by the local farmers and small hardware items. Among the foodstuffs, Sembian brands, such as the Joyous Thresher and Milver's Silver Star, predominate. For the convenience of obtaining these foreign condiments and comfort foods, customers pay about 10% over the usual prices for everything in the store. No wonder Turnell is so fat.

#### Tavern

The Royal Flagon



The Flagon is neither a memorable nor a well-appointed alehouse; it is just handy and well used. The low prices and giant-sized tankards here make this taproom particularly popular with adventurers and travelers, and the Flagon's "no music, no fighting" policy encourages a lot of chatter to go on and tall tales to be swapped.

Hireswords find the Flagon a good place to get hired, and wayfarers find it a good location to hear the local news, gossip, and rumors. Since she acquired a magical ring that allows her to change her appearance, the grand mairshar has even taken to dropping in here in disguise to enjoy a brew and hear what Tassadrans are saying, so adventurers are warned not to discuss illicit or dangerous things too freely.

#### lnn

The Markhouse

!!!! BBBB

The Markhouse is a fine inn—and no wonder. With no state apartments to accommodate important visitors, the grand mairshar makes very sure that the local inn is of the best quality. By and large, she succeeds. It is not large and has not the modern touches and the absolute luxury of, say, a haughty house in Waterdeep, but for a road inn, it *is* of the very best.

Rooms here cost 1 gp per head per night, and stabling and everything else but



drinks beyond the evenfeast wine laid on by the house is included. Every suite has a bathtub and a bathmaid to do the scrubbing and filling, and every floor has a parlor with muffins, biscuits, and chilled berry juice always available.

I especially like the news criers. Once each hour, a comely youth runs up the stairs to each parlor and in a soft and pleasant voice recounts the latest news of events both great and small to reach Tegal's Mark. ("In Glaun, Bester's black cow has given birth again. That is her twenty-third calf, and it is a boy.") Charming.

Festhall
The Sword and Sash

There is an old Tegal joke to the effect that whenever one is looking for a mairshar in an emergency, she or he is sure to be at the Sash. This bawdy theater and escort club recently stopped serving all ale, wine, and brandy after reaching an agreement with the owners of the Royal Flagon. Only zzar is poured here now—but I am sure few of the customers have noticed. Most customers never take their eyes off the jest-roaring comedians on the stage or the almost-unclad assistants who aid those funny folk and provide pleasant escort company to those who pay when shows are not running.

The Sash is a fun but riotous place where 16 tipsy revelers once jumped into the same bed on a bet and sent it through the floor to crash onto the stage below. Of course, the spectacle they created was the funniest thing on the stage that evening.





# Appendix 1: Folk of the Dales



olk listed herein are by no means the only important people in the Dalelands. Indeed, Volo avoided rulers and envoys as much as pos-

sible and, as is his wont, concentrated on individuals of interest to the traveler, rogue, and adventurer. Not all of them cooperated with his inquiries, so what appears here can be considered a *very* incomplete roster of names that matter in the Dales today

With Elminster's aid, probable levels and other game statistics of these beings have been estimated and personal details added. This information is fresh, so statistics published here take precedence over earlier published data. People are listed alphabetically by their first names herein because many folk in the Dales lack surnames. (Nicknames and titles have been ignored when alphabetizing a name in this index.)

ALDUVAR SNOWBRAND (NG hm M10). Alduvar is a merchant-mage who operates Jendalar's Fine Fruits in Archenbridge, buying produce from Dale farmers and shipping it swiftly to the large cities of Cormyr and Sembia. Unbeknownst to most except senior army officers, his consort and business partner Selni Ravenhair (CG hf T2), and his fellow Swords, Alduvar is Blue Sword of Archendale. He often rides with the soldiers of the Dale cloaked in the illusionary disguise of a middle-aged, veteran horse lancer.

Through his trade ties, Alduvar works in secret to gain allies for Archendale in Sembia. He believes that Cormyr is an imperialist power and that Hillsfar and Westgate are just itching to become even worse expansionist aggressors, and that all the Dales need new allies now that the elves have gone—allies that can match the magic that the Zhentarim, the war wizards of Cormyr, and the mages of Mulmaster, Thay, and Hillsfar can hur!! He is still trying to find such allies and to build his own magical powers to protect Archendale as it needs to be protected.

A cautious, quiet man who is a very good actor and a farsighted strategist, Alduvar makes a dangerous foe and, for anyone not of Archendale, a less-than-reliable ally. En pursuit of his goals, he seizes (or has seized) odd or magical items, spellbooks, and scrolls from any adventurers foolhardy enough to brave the ruins and tombs in Arch Wood if they cross the Swords.

BELURASTRA STORMFALL (NG hf F1). Belurastra is the shrewd, soft-spoken, and keen-witted owner and senior escort of the Bold Banners festhall in Essembra. A tall woman of striking beauty but quiet, almost shy gait and manners, Belurastra is beloved by many regular clients, who find her company an oasis of kind and quiet calm in a harsh world. For her part, Belurastra genuinely likes most folk and does her best to make them feel at ease.

For this reason and because of her farsighted investments, Belurastra rose to own the



Belurastra Stormfall



Bold Banners after its owner, the gruff old merchant Eldeburth Greensheaf, perished in the fall of Zhentil Keep. The festhall has quietly prospered under her hand and enabled her to invest in Sembian real estate and businesses. She employs several carefully anonymous agents to place and manage investments in Sembia, Cormyr, and throughout the Dales. One envious Essembran said of her, "She owns a good quarter of northern Sembia's farms and buildings, only the Sembians don't know it yet."

Belurastra likes fine (not provocative) clothing, tea and exotic liqueurs, and talking about the future of the Realms—the changes coming in the everyday lives of common folk—with intelligent, far-traveled, and discerning folk. Such talks are free to folk she likes; others must

pay for her time.

Belurastra survived a Zhentilar occupation of Essembra during the Time of Troubles despite (local rumor insists) slaying a powerful Zhentarim mage. Her mastery of mercantile investments is surpassed only by her iron calm. It is believed that one of her frequent clients is no less a personage than Maalthiir of Hillsfar himself! (He is said to visit her in disguise and to have given her several magical items with which she can defend her person if attacked). She is revered by the ladies of the Banners, who regard her as a mother as well as an employer. To them alone she is "Mother Astra."

DHEREN OGRESBANE (LN hm F9). Dheren is a handsome, intelligent young officer of Archendale. He is the commander of his own Ride and secretly Red Sword of the Dale (one of its three mysterious rulers). The Red Sword is Lord Champion Commander of Archendale's armies and is responsible for equipping them, training them, deploying them, and maintaining their internal security This last entails rooting out agents of Cormyr, Sembia, Mulmaster, Thay, Westgate, various merchant costers, the Cult of the Dragon, and the Zhentarim from the ranks.

A careful, diligent, and very observant man, Dheren takes his duties seriously and always has the Dale's forces in readiness for long sieges or the onslaught of a large invading army. Food, water, healing potions, and battle magic are hidden at the ready, and decoy troops and equipment are in constant use and movement so that no spy for another power can learn the true strength and disposition of all of the Dale's forces. Through several agents, Dheren has begun to hire adventurers as part of his duties to use them to test the vigilance and mettle of his own troops, to learn things about the armed potential of Sembia and Hillsfar, and to investigate possible traitors to the Dale—in particular, the Darkwater Brand.

ERETHUN RIVENSTAVE, Burgher of Harrowdale (NE hm M11). Burgher Erethun is a silkily polite



Erethun Rivenstave, Burgher of Harrowdale

and ostentatiously wealthy wizard who dwells in a shorefront tower on the edge of Harrowdale town. None of the Harrans trust this oily, superior man, but so far they are unaware that he is an agent of Mulmaster (the source of his wealth) or that he laid the spell trap that slew his predecessor at High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin of Mulmaster's command.

Selfaril hopes to covertly control Harrowdale in years to come, giving Mulmaster a port in which to base a fleet in the Dragon Reach. Now that Zhentil Keep has fallen, he strives to control all access to the Moonsea in preparation for

an assault on rival Hillsfar.

Selfaril is sponsoring a lot of trouble in Scardale right now to distract Sembian agents and interests from noticing what is occurring in Harrowdale—and that, according to Selfaril's plan, is the murder of the remaining six of the Seven Burghers, one by one and in as unsuspicious a manner as possible. They will then be replaced by other agents of Mulmaster under Erethun's control, and Mulman money will make them the wealthiest Harrans whenever surveys are taken.

Erethun Rivenstave has been promised overlordship of Mulmaster's holdings in the Dales, which will expand steadily until Sembia is pre-





Baffle-Chaplain Gordon Stakaria

cipitated into war, whereupon agents of Mulmaster all over Sembia will strike at important citizens, treasuries, stores of magic, and the like). He is shrewd enough to know that Selfaril and his Mulman co-conspirators will find it very convenient for him to die once Mulman influence is revealed so that events can all be blamed on his personal evil ambition and not any plan set in motion by Mulmaster. In light of this, he is planning to engineer his own false death and escape into a disguise he has been carefully building at the Fall of Stars.

Right now Erethun is trying to improve his own mastery of magic as much as he can without revealing his hard work to his masters. Through the Fall of Stars club, he is seeking to hire bands of unscrupulous adventurers to gain spellbooks, scrolls, and magical items by raiding the towers of certain elderly, failing mages of Sembia and by exploring ruins and elven safeholds in the Elven Court woods.

Erethun has a soft, purring voice and very quick wits. He is known to wear a ring of the ram and a ring of invisibility and to carry a wand of polymorphing at all times.

**BATTLE-CHAPLAIN GORDON STAKARIA** (CN hm P10 battleguard of Tempus). Battle-Chaplain

Stakaria is a scarred, close-mouthed veteran warrior-priest who is Swordmaster of the Shrine of Swords in Swordpoint, the fortress at Archenbridge in Archendale. Gordon dedicates himself to the service of the war god through the feats and faithful worship of the soldiers of Archendale and has little time for those of other faiths or devotees of Tempus who hail from elsewhere. He has seen much and is impressed by little.

In return for healing, prayers to Tempus for the war gods favor, and the like, the Swordmaster prefers to exact services from the faithful as payment. These often center on personal hardiness and endurance, such as: 'Climb a certain Arkhen peak in winter with only a dagger and leather armor, find a wyvern lair, and kill at least one wyvern, then bring back its head to this altar as an offering to Tempus in proof of your deed."

Feats of prowess in battle performed by those of other faiths do impress Gordon. He views them as achievements not aided by Tempus. He is deeply stirred by hearing of women who are bold and skilled in battle, as he spent much of his youth seeking a suitable mate with such qualities, only to have one swordswoman after another tragically slain in their adventures together.

GULMARIN RELDACAP (CN hm P9 Gondsman of Gond). Gulmarin, the Lord High Smith and Artificer of the House of Gond temple in Essembra, is an arrogant, peace-loving old man who gets upset by change and even more upset by what he sees as the loud, irresponsible arrogance of the young. These are strange views in a priest of Gond, and there are increasing rumors that the complaints of faithful whom he has refused to help will result in his removal from office.

Gulmarin cares nothing for such complaints and does not believe for a moment that he will ever be demoted by any "outsider clergy." Whenever he is visited by an envoy from elsewhere in the loosely organized priesthood of Gond, he presents the envoy with the results of his latest tinkerings: a small but useful invention she or he has not seen before. This brilliance of invention is Gulmarin's great secret, and the reason he does not want to be pestered by the daily concerns of the faithful—or anyone else.

Over the years, the Lord High Smith and Artificer has devised locks that require three keys; self-filling oil lamps that take in fuel from a reservoir when needed without needing tending or relighting; box jigs that allow carpenters to cut boards and posts identical to each other; sliding metal lids for tin buckets to keep water and vermin out of them; cage spits for the cooking of small fowl over a flame; and many other small items. In addition, his work has improved candle molds, dry ingredient measures, and cart suspensions.

Gulmarin's underling Caldeen resents the old man's difficult nature and neglect of his duties, since Caldeen must act for the temple without



receiving the recognition and pay of the high office. The other two priests at the temple, Oldbrin Stonelun and Targarth Snowul, recognize Gulmarin's genius and are content to keep Essembra's temple in dusty public neglect while assisting their master behind closed doors on his projects.

JALANDYL O' STARS (CG hef F11). Jalandyl is a dancer at the Drunken Lion alehouse in Archenbridge. Secretly, she is also a Harper agent who has often aided those who come to harm in Archendale. She is muscular and has old sword scars on her arms and legs but is still the most beautiful of the Lion's ladies.

The owner of the Lion, Meerkun Habalar, owes her over 20,000 gp that he has borrowed from her over the years to keep the place open. He dare not eliminate her and his debt together, because he knows the Harpers will hunt him to the far corners of Faerûn if he does. Though he and Jalandyl neither like nor trust each other, they have made an uneasy partnership that has lasted for over 20 years now—and have grown quite comfortable with insulting each other.

Jalandyl has practiced throwing items in the tavern for years and is skilled in the use of the sling thrown daggers, and the bolas. She has a +4 attack bonus with any of these weapons in the taproom of the Lion and a +2 bonus elsewhere. She must be up on a table to have room to use the bola. Her bola (weight 2, size M, type B, speed factor 8, damage 1d3/1d2) can bring down a mansized target. When the bola successfully strikes, the victim is held fast and must take a round to make a Strength ability check in order to get free. Failure means the bola is still holding fast.

A successful called shot attack to the legs entangles a victim, who must make a Dexterity ability check to stay standing; this check is at a -3 penalty if the victim was moving. A so-entangled victim stops moving. A successful called shot to the arms prevents weapon and shield use (Strength check at a -2 penalty), and a successful called shot to the head strangles the victim (unless a great helm or closed-face helm is worn). This causes an additional 1d3 points of damage per round the first round of contact and an additional 1d3 points every round thereafter until the bola is removed.

Jalandyl knows a lot about the mining delves and mountain trails one can reach from the head of Archendale and sells quite good maps of some of these sites, though she warns that monsters in and near them are increasing in numbers. Jalandyl and Jalia of the Old Stonebows Inn know each other well (including each other's secret professions) and both spy for and aid each other habitually. A Sembian merchant who once tried to kidnap Jalandyl for her knowledge of the mountains was attacked by most of the Old Stonebows inn staff—and when he fled, he found a militia troop hot on his heels!



Lord High Smith and Artificer Gulmarin Reldacap

JALIA MOSSGREEN (CG hf F12). Jalia is a grizzled old semiretired warrior of broad shoulders, broad hips, and even broader humor. She has a harsh voice, a laugh that is heard often in Archenbridge, and an impressive collection of battle scars.

Owner and proprietress of the Old Stonebows Inn in Archenbridge, Jalia donates food, mintwater, and ale to all militia exercises in the Dale—and in fact supervises the militia. Her position as Black Sword of Archendale (one of its three mysterious co-rulers) is an open secret among Arkhenfolk. Most people in Archendale at least know that to get word to the Swords, one seeks out "the old laughing lady" at the best inn in Archenbridge.

Jalia has a wide selection of friends, has been known to quietly aid elves, Harpers (including Jalandyl O' Stars), and war wizards of Cormyr. She wears some sort of small magical token that enables her to call on an archmage for aid—but tales differ as to just which wizard she can summon.

Always open to new viewpoints and friendships with all manner of strange folk from far places, Jalia brings the news of distant places to insular, arrogant Archendale and gives her co-





Rhannon Manycoats

rulers (see Alduvar and Dheren) an understanding of motives, current events, and what might soon befall in the wider world that they would never be able to gain otherwise. The other two Swords revere her as "the truly wise one amongst us" and overlook her liaisons with handsome men who for all they know may well serve the darkest of Archendale's foes.

RHANNON MANYCOATS (NG hf T8). Rhannon is a retired thief who now runs the Hitching Post store in Essembra. She is short, spry, and stout, and looks like a well-muscled lady of 60 or so winters. She usually pads barefoot around her shop in what looks like several old Sembian carpets sewn together into a shapeless patchwork dress and wears her gray hair pulled back into a back-of-the-knees-length braid.

Rhannon's manner is always calmly sardonic. She knows everything that happens in town, seems to like living alone, and charges high prices, especially to folk not of the Dale—who face an extra 20% markup atop her usual 10% surcharge. She is known as "Ran" to everyone in Battledale, and despite her brisk coolness is well-liked. She has a habit of snooping out people's doings and therefore their needs and hobbies and then bringing in just the items

they need. When they wander in to the Post, they then find just what they wanted, no matter how obscure or exotic it might be.

Rhannon was born in Westgate, grew up on various merchant ships on the Inner Sea waves, and when on her own; became a thief of the Red Blades pirate band. She operated onshore throughout Sembia, Chessenta, and Impiltur to learn what cargo would be sailing where so that her fellow dastards could strike unerringly at the most valuable ships. She retired from this life when one such treasure turned out to be a wizard's menagerie and it was set loose by its furious owner to hunt down and slay every last Red Blade.

Rhannon is, she believes, the sole survivor of this onslaught. Her quick and well-placed strikes slew gargoyles, trained stirges, oozes, and worse in a year-long flight that took her halfway to Amn before she found herself writhing in dying agony impaled on the talons of a flying golem on her way back to face the wizard. Her captor, the archmage Saelanth of Telflamm, thought her defenseless and decided to toy with his dying captive. Somehow, in a manner Rhannon refuses to discuss, she slew him, found potions to heal herself with, and fled from his tower with certain unspecified items of magic. In an effort to regain these lost items, Saelanth's apprentices are searching for Rhannon, but their master had turned them into less-than-human, tentacle-faced things, and they cannot operate freely in civilized territory.

Needless to say, this experience changed Rhannon's previous self-serving outlook on life profoundly. She used some of her stolen magic to appear older and fatter and, in this guise, retired to a life of building the settlement around her into a gigantic network of observers that report unusual visitors and things to her. Her knowledge of shipping on the Sea of Fallen Stars has allowed her to prosper in the procurement of cheap goods and unusual wares, and she has been careful to befriend the war chancellor of Essembra, who regards her as his most useful citizen. He will come to her aid if she blows a certain horn.

Rhannon is much younger than she appears; she has actually not seen more than 36 winters. She can defend herself with many hidden items of magic, including the following known pieces: a scarab of scintillating auras (see Appendix II) that conceals all alignment and magical emanations on her shop and person, a ring of the ram, a ring of flying (identical in powers to wings of flying), a scarab vs. golems (effective against any sort of golem), a wand of magic missiles, at least two spheres of iron bands of Bilarro, a torc of regeneration (equal in effects to a ring of regeneration), a belt of spell turning (equivalent to a ring of spell turning), and a sword of dancing. She actually has two scarabs of scintillating auras: one she wears, and one that is hidden near the center of the main room of the Hitching Post.



Rhannon also has at least three golems (one each of bone, stone, and iron) standing ready to defend her in her shop. They automatically attack—until the target is destroyed or flees—anyone who unleashes any sort of spell within the walls of the Post unless Rhannon specifically commands them not to.

Rhannon is customarily armed with a selection of sleep-poisoned daggers that she wears on forearm and thigh sheaths, concealed under her dress. She is extremely adept at throwing these. (She practices throwing them for at least an hour every day..) She should be considered to have +3 attack bonus when throwing them when inside her familiar shop and +2 bonus when throwing them anywhere else.

RHAUNTIDES (CG hm M14). The Sage of Deepingdale, Rhauntides, is a cultured man who devotes himself to the study of human and elven magic, specifically to its present development and the history of its use and users in the past. In this, his expertise is such that Vangerdahast and the Harpers both consult him.

For the past 30 years he has dwelt in a tower of his own making in Highmoon, the capital of Deepingdale, where he trains his beloved wife and intended successor as Loremaster of Magic to the Realms and Guardian Mage of Deepingdale. His wife is the soft-spoken and beautiful Shaunil Tharm (CG hf M9), an impish, tall, lithe mage of skill who was originally born in Amn whose hair sweeps the ground behind her. Shaunil much enjoys drifting around the skies of Deepingdale by night, flying with a bottle of elverquisst in one hand and her lord at her side, taking in the beauties of the Dale below and watching the doings of its beasts and folk.

Rhauntides is tall and thin, and has piercing blue eyes, handsome features, and a small, pointed white beard. His movements are still smooth and supple, and his dark, shoulderlength hair is going white at the temples. He is sometimes mistaken for Khelben Arunsun of Waterdeep by folk who have never actually seen either mage close up.

Where once Rhauntides was driven by his hunger to learn as many new spells as he could find as fast as possible, now he revels in learning and fixing in his mind every last nuance and variant of all the known spells. Because of his depth of learning, in spell battle he is a fearsome foe: He can never be surprised by any combination or application of magic. His amusements center on going to Candlekeep and various mage fairs in disguise and humbling overly arrogant mages or sages by besting them with his knowledge of and power over magic.

Rhauntides's past adventuring prowess gained him not only fabulous wealth and magic but a magical item of fearsome power: the *belt of stars* (see Appendix II). He is said to have cav-

erns full of gems and coins, and he is the only known mage who can command 14 golems into battle at once!

Rhauntides is trying to bring his wife to a greater raw mastery of magic than he has by keeping her reliance on items to a minimum and her roster of learned spells spare and useful. She understands and accept these restrictions for the time being, and they share a deep, unshakable love.

Thrice the elves of Evermeet have tried to get Rhauntides to move to their realm, ostensibly so that he could have and raise children in carefree surrounding but really to gain his knowledge and spell mastery as one of their resources. Each time he has politely refused the invitation, but as a token of his respect for the offer, he has on each occasion brought a spellbook to Queen Amlaruil Moonflower in Evermeet, filling her courtiers with astonishment and fear due to his effortless and undetected passage through all the elven wards and magical defenses.

#### LIGHT OF LATHANDER MORNMASTER STELLAGA BRIGHTSTAR (LG hef C12 of Lathander). Stellaga is a tall, slender, soft-spoken natural diplomat who is high priestess of the



Light of Lathander Mornmaster Stellaga Brightstar



Glory of the Morning temple in Archenbridge. She is very dedicated to her work, which she sees to be encouraging Arkhenfolk to build things, take up hobbies, and start new businesses or services through gentle, practical encouragement and the freely donated assistance of temple workers. Stellaga has little opportunity to indulge her secret passions: dancing, adventuring, and having whirlwind romances with people from far lands.

Stellaga rarely allows herself to step out of her role as a kind, gentle leader, but when she does, watch out! Elminster tells an amusing tale about one swordsman, Belorn "Battleaxe" the Barbarian, who spent an exhausting night trying to escort both Stellaga and Jalia Mossgreen through the gardens of Halanthaver House at a party thrown by the Arkhen clan of that name at their manor on River Way in Archenbridge. The two ladies almost came to serious blows over Belorn, and he bore bruises for months afterward from when he foolishly tried to "protect them from themselves."

HIGH HARVESTMASTER THALIACH MINDOGAR (NG hm C8 of Chauntea). Thaliach is an ambitious, energetic, young priest who commands the faithful of the Grain Goddess in Archendale as leader of the Bounty of the Goddess temple there. Seeing the safe, unexciting faith of Chauntea in decline in a town of ambitious investors and entrepreneurs, Thaliach decided to seize influence here by outdoing everyone else at investments. He used the temple coffers to build an impressive and ever-expanding network of subsidiary businesses; trade alliances; favors owed; tithes turned to trade in Sembia, Cormyr, and farther afield; and temple agents who travel Sembia, the Dales, and the wider Dragon Reach lands looking for business opportunities, coming surpluses and shortages, and other information that can be turned to trade advantages.

A rather sickly, slim fanatic, Thaliach rarely leaves the inner rooms of his temple, spending his time in private rituals to Chauntea, collecting and poring over maps of all Faerûn (his personal hobby), and issuing orders or discussing strategies for furthering the powers of his burgeoning trade empire. In Elminster's opinion, Thaliarch's network is just growing large enough to be noticed by the powerful merchants of Sembia and Westgate-and be subsequently crushed. Interesting times lie ahead for the temple and for the security of Archendale, the Old Mage believes, for in his words: "While the Swords worry about the rot in the Darkwater Brand, the true weakness at the heart of Archendale sits at a map table in the inner sanctom of the house of Chauntea in Archenbridge and fancies himself a behind-the-scenes world power."

VZOUN DAKKER (LE hm T12): Vzoun is a foul-tempered old man ruled by his grudges, feuds, and imagined foes. Frustrated in his ambitions to become a Sembian lord and a powerful Zhentarim agent, he now works to bring about the downfall of both the Dark Network and the realm of merchants.

Head of the Dakker family (an old, wealthy, and influential Arkhen clan), Vzoun owns the Darkwater Brand, his family's merchant coster, which has bases in Archenbridge, Hillsfar, and Ordulin. Under cover of trading fresh produce and low-grade Arkhen ores for weaponry and other metalwork shipped out of Glister, Melvaunt, and Thentia, Vzoun runs a flourishing smuggling business and a small but lucrative slaving trade specializing in wastrel offspring of rich Sembian merchants and revealed Zhentarim agents that various folk want to have just quietly disappear without any messy murders.

A dealer in poisons and sleeping potions, Vzoun sees spies everywhere and is especially afraid of wizards using magic to discover his illicit activities. He is careful not to break any laws in Archendale, where he is, as one Arkhen citizen put it, "respected from a safe distance."

YANDRIN THORL (CN hm M17). Yandrin is a quiet but mighty wizard who made it clear to ambitious folk in Archendale, Cormyr, and Sembia that he would not tolerate attempts to conquer the High Dale. He said he would respond to such actions by unleashing "a rain of meteor swarms" on communities in any offending country. His demonstration reduced a forested pirate isle in the Sea of Fallen Stars to melted rock and ashes.

Yandrin lives in a modest-looking, threestory, round, thin mage's tower located just beyond the accepted boundaries of Highmoon next to the trail leading to the Dancing Place. Visitors to his home are greeted by what is apparently some form of intelligent, permanent unseen servant and asked by a permanent magic mouth to write down their business in a musty volume and then leave. A sign over the book tells visitors that if Yandrin thinks the matter is important enough, he gets back to the visitors within three days. If he does not, then the visitors should consider the matter closed. People who try to damage or sneak onto Yandrin's property usually find themselves teleported suddenly to a distant mountain crag in the Thunder Peaks sans their clothes and equipment.

No one is sure what magical resources Yandrin has to call upon, but it is certain that they are vast. Elminster and he play talis card games once a year every year on the same date for control that year of an unspecified relic or artifact of great power.



# Appendix II: Dales Magic



he Dalelands hold much magic that Volo has not seen, notably what rests in Shadowdale in the care of Elminster, Storm Silver-

hand, and the ghostly Syluné; what lies hidden in the ruins of Zhentil Keep; and what has not yet been taken from monster-haunted Myth Drannor. Elminster refused to elaborate on what might be found in these places, but reminded us of a fourth locale overlooked by most: the holdings of the many retired adventurers and rich Sembians who dwell in manor houses west of Essembra in Battledale, hidden among their forests and gardens down a labyrinth of twisting, unposted lanes.

He did agree to furnish information on the magic Volo mentions directly, and here it is. The Old Mage himself warns that what you read here may be incomplete and is no substitute for actual instruction in how to use an item by someone else who has used it. He further cautions that openly possessing or seeking either *Orosul's scepter* or the *Taking Bone* probably invites attacks from beings wanting to gain these items for themselves—and that they will no doubt strike early, brutally, and often.

## Magical Items The Belt of Stars

**XP Value:** Not applicable (cannot be made)

**GP Value:** 400,000

This unique item was made by Azuth before he achieved godhood, and exists

only at his pleasure. He can destroy it with a thought if it is misused. Both he and Mystra would prefer to see it at work for good in Faerûn by allowing a responsible mage to have power enough to ignore the attacks of lesser mages and pursue worthy ends. When it is not so used, Mystra strips it away, leaving power-hungry or selfish mages bereft of its aid at a crucial moment.

The *belt of stars* resembles a chain of *ioun stones* and appears to be a string of glowing gems that float in midair by themselves. The *belt of stars* is composed of 18 identical star sapphires. The *belt* has the following properties:

- The wearer of the *belt* can *detect magic* and *detect invisibility* in creatures and objects automatically by sight.
- The wearer of the belt can fly (similar to the 3rd-level wizard spell fly) once per day for up to one continuous turn at a time.
- The wearer of the belt can cast all spells and launch all known powers of personally carried magical items by silent force of will alone.
- The belt wearer can launch more than one spell in a round, up to the limits imposed by the number of gems in the belt. Each gem in the belt allows the wearer to cast one extra spell of a set level once per eight hours. The belt has two stones that allow casting of an additional 1st level spell, two that allow casting of a 2nd level spell, and so on. Thus, technically, an archmage could let loose with 19 spells in a round (two each of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and





9th level and another memorized spell of any level). After this round, however, the belt could allow the casting of no "extra" spells for eight hours.

Extra spells cast through the auspices of the belt may be selected on the spot without prior memorization or the requirement of material components, but they must be ones that the belt wearer has studied and cast at least three times previously, and they must be of a level that the wearer can ordinarily wield. In other words, if a belt wearer can think of a particular spell she or he has used before, the belt allows him or her to hurl it as if she or he memorized it. Such spells also cannot imbue other magical items or people with permanent magical effects. (In other words, the gem powers of the belt cannot be used to cheaply create magical items or gift the wearing mage

with extra permanent magical powers.) Such spells cannot also normally require a unique material component.

Belt gems struck by dispel magic spells do not operate for the eight hours, regardless of whether their powers have been called upon or not. A dispel magic spell automatically affects a single belt gem that is randomly chosen unless the caster is able to touch a particular gem, in which case that gem is affected. Other spells (including such destructive spells as disintegrate) cast specifically at the belt — not just at the mage wearing the belt of stars — are absorbed harmlessly by the gems. The gems also seem impervious to all physical attacks.

Using the gem powers of the *belt of stars* does not stop any of its other powers from functioning at the same time.



#### Blood of Lathander

This unique minor artifact of Lathander consists of four drops of the god's blood imprisoned in an oval, fist-sized piece of amber.

#### History

Centuries ago Mystra selected the archmage Sammaster as one of her Chosen. Overwhelmed by the power invested in him, he developed delusions of godhood and set himself up as a seer. His teachings that "dead dragons shall rule the world entire" started the Cult of the Dragon. Sammaster and the cultists then set out to fulfill this prophecy by creating dracoliches and serving them by bringing them treasure.

The Harpers tracked down the corrupted archmage and destroyed many of his followers. Unable to defeat one of Mystra's Chosen, Harper priests of the Morninglord called upon their god. An avatar of Lathander appeared and challenged Mystra's fallen Chosen to battle, outraged by the thought of the unchanging eternity of tyranny the archmage promised. The Morninglord's avatar destroyed Sammaster, but not before the wizard delivered a severe wound. (Sammaster was capable of attacking the deity successfully due to his investiture with some of Mystra's divine essence.)

Four drops of Lathander's blood fell to the ground, where they were gathered up by a priest of the Morninglord from the village of Hap and placed in an amber flask for safe-keeping. Their magical nature fused the flask into a seamless form. During the battle, many Harpers were slain as well as most of the cultists, and in the confusion the newly created relic was largely overlooked. It has languished ever since in Hap, forgotten by most of Lathander's clergy.

#### Campaign Use

The *Blood of Lathander* currently resides within Lathander's Open Hand, a small temple to the Morninglord located in the tiny village of Hap in Battledale. The energetic new priestess of that temple, Dawnmaster Cathalandra Dovaer, employs the *Blood* to aid adventurers active in the area in quests favored by the Morninglord. If the Morninglord determines the artifact is needed elsewhere, the PCs might be called upon to escort the *Blood* to another site and protect it against the attacks of groups such as the Cult of the Dragon.

#### Powers

Constant. The *Blood* flies (usually floating motionless) and glows with a rosy radiance at Lathander's will. The glow within the amber varies at the pleasure of the god, from gentle to near-blinding. If it pleases Lathander to do so, the *Blood* can signal his approval or disapproval by pulsing in irregular flashes when a priest of the Morninglord asks a question of him or takes a particular action in its presence.

**Invoked.** In the hands of a priest or paladin of Lathander only, the artifact can *cure critical wounds* four times a day and *raise dead* once a day. Once every second day it can *regenerate* a lost limb or organ and bestow *restoration* as the spell.

To call on its powers, the priest or paladin must touch the *Blood*. Thereafter it flies about in response to his or her will and must be directed to touch a being and function for the healing powers to act on that being. If two of Lathander's faithful strive against each other to control the *Blood*, it hangs motionless.

The Blood of Lathander can also detect lie, identify, or positively confirm a devotion to Lathander in a being who claims to worship the Morninglord when a priest (only) of Lathander holds it, touches it to a



being or item, and wills it to do one of these things.

Curse. If handled or moved by someone not of the Morninglord's faith, the Blood of Lathander pulses in extremely bright, irregular flashes (brighter than a continual light spell) designed to make its carrier release it or to draw attention to its presence. If it is carried about by such a being, the bearer's dreams are haunted by images of slowly dripping blood-drops of blood that turn to fire and blaze away before they strike the ground. If a nonworshiper of Lathander continues to carry it for more than three days, it begins blazing with a bright light and heating up like metal affected by a heat metal spell; however, once it reaches searing heat in the third round, it stays that hot until discarded by the unauthorized bearer, whereupon it returns to ambient temperature in three rounds.

## Suggested Means of Destruction

If the amber is broken, the divine blood blazes away into nothingness instantly. It cannot be captured by a wizard or alchemist.

- The amber must be crushed in the jaws of the eldest surviving dracolich of the Realms.
- The amber must be placed within a dead magic area for 99 years, whereupon it disintegrates.
- The amber must be crushed beneath the boot of an avatar of Talos or in the fist of the reigning god of the dead.

#### The Crown of Dracandros

XP Value: 12,000 GP Value: 25,000

This item is thought to be unique to Red Wizards. The only known example of its

type was first encountered in the possession of Dracandros of the Crimson, foe to the sellsword Alias of Westgate and the saurial paladin Dragonbait. However, it is thought that he did not invent it himself, but rather acquired it through his own devious means from another Red Wizard before being banished from Thay.

A crown of Dracandros is not a crown that one wears at all. It gets its name because it is an electrum circlet large enough to go around the waist of most humanoids that when activated turns slowly as it floats in midair, chiming softly as small motes of light play about it. These radiances resemble gems on and above the circlet, giving it an appearance akin to the construction of many royal crowns.

Such a *crown* has a number of powers that operate constantly in a 90-foot-spherical-range:

- It can *detect invisibility* in creatures and items by chiming. An alerted being who touches the circlet can then see such things as if they were outlined in bright red auras
- It can *detect magic* by chiming and turning a vivid blue. This detection occurs only when a spell or magical item discharge is actually released or moves into range of the *crown* while active. Passive defensive magic (such as *rings of protection* and magical armor) remain undetected by this ability unless they have a charged power that is used.

When activated by touch and silent command, such a *crown* acts as follows: Each round, it has a 1 in 6 chance of emitting one of the following magical effects. Roll 1d6; on a 1, an effect is emitted. Roll 1d12 to determine which effect occurs. All effects are identical to the wizard spells of the same name cast by a 20th-level mage.



These unleashed effects take place in a random direction wherever there is sufficient open space for them to manifest 1d20+2x10 feet distant from the *crown*.

1d12	-	1d12	2
Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
1	Flaming sphere	e 7	Chain lightning
2	Web	8	Guards and wards
3	Color spray	9	Fireball
4	Death fog	10	Cloudkill
5	Cone of cold	11	Animate dead
6	Dispel magic	12	Evard's black tentacles
C	. 1		

Such *crowns* are very effective at defending an area the owner does not want anyone to enter. Once activated, the effects harm everyone, even the activator of the *crown*. They can only be ended by a crown's owner reaching and grasping the *crown* and willing it to shut down by imagining or speaking the *crown's* command word or phrase.

The making of all similar sorts of these *crowns* is an extremely evil act known to involve the death of a living being who possesses spellcasting abilities or has natural spell-like powers, the destruction of an operable magical item with more than one power, and the use of a scroll of each spell that the finished *crown* can cast or emit. It is rumored that certain senior Red Wizards have developed *crowns* that emit various sorts of *shadow monsters*.

#### Onosul's Scepten

**XP Value:** Not applicable (can no longer be made)

**GP Value:** 20,000

Only few specimens of this special type of Netherese power scepters are known to exist. They are known by the name of *Orosul's scepter* because the wizard of that name at one time possessed half of one and had made a study of them. (Undoubt-

edly they were called by another name in Netherese times.)

Each Orosul's scepter takes the form of a metal bar about as long as a small human's forearm with a bulbous metal ball at either end that is faceted like a gem. These scepters are made in two halves that join at the center of the bar when touched together. They are always active when fused and whole and exhibit only two powers when separate: The faceted end glows ruby-red when touched to items or brought into areas bearing a dweomer, and the entire halfscepter glows with a dull blue-green radiance equivalent to a faerie fire when within about a mile of its matching half. In the case of the *detect magic* ability the intensity of the red glow is roughly equivalent to the strength of the encountered magic.

Individual *Orosul's scepter* halves cannot be mated to halves made as part of another *Orosul's scepter*. An active, whole *Orosul's scepter* can restore magical energy to items that use charges. It restores one charge in the first hour of continual contact plus one charge every fourth hour thereafter.

Hit points can also be healed by the scepter at the same rate as charges are bestowed. Continual contact with the bare skin of the being to be healed is necessary for it to occur. The scepter- wielder need not actively hold it in a hand during this time, so long as skin contact is made with the target chosen to be healed (which need not be the scepter-wielder, who activates the scepter's abilities with a command word). Rather than healing hit points, the scepter - wielder can choose to make the scepter act to regenerate lost limbs, organs, and the like, or close gaping wounds or smooth away mutilations and scars. Such damage is regenerated in



from one day to one tenday (Faerûnian week) of constant contact.

Every *Orosul's scepter* also has the power to unleash a blasting spell once every fourth round if grasped and ordered to. Most of these spells are fire-or lightning-related, but the precise magic unleashed by each *scepter* can only be determined by using it.

Orosul's scepters themselves do not have or use charges, and there seems to be no limit to their powers, but legends speak of scepters failing when taken underground away from the sun for long periods or when moved more one locale to another.

### Scarab of Scintillating Auras

**XP Value:** 4,000 **GP Value:** 8,000

These rare items appear to be normal works of adornment and can even function when concealed under or stitched into clothing. They emit a blinding chaos of flashing, many-hued magical radiances that are only visible to beings trying to magically discern the alignment of their wearers or the presence of enchantments. They continuously conceal the presence and nature of all such auras within a 90-foot-radius sphere of themselves. The sphere is *not* broken by barriers that foil normal vision. This protection is automatic and cannot be turned off by the *scarab* wearer.

A scarab of scintillating auras does have one power that is under the wearer's control: It can turn itself and its wearer invisible (as per the 2nd-level invisibility wizard spell) once a day when it is grasped and ordered. Once the wearer becomes visible again, a full day must pass from the resumption of visibility before the scarab's invisibility power can work again.

#### The Shattened Sword

**XP Value:** Not applicable (cannot be made)

**GP Value:** 8,000 per piece (100,000 if intact)

Accidentally broken and magically transformed during a long-ago, titanic spell battle between the elven Princess of Deepingdale and the Twelve Dancing Wizards who attacked her, this blade has broken into nine pieces. Though they adhere to each other if joined together in the proper order, the original powers of the sword have been lost forever, and combining the pieces gives the wielder no special additional powers.

Some would say that more magic than the nine shards bestow individually is unnecessary, for mere possession of a piece conveys a useful magical power even in nonwizards. The listed spell-like effects can be cast by the bearer without touching the blade, employing spell components, or saying anything. All magic is unleashed by silent act of will alone. The spell-like effects take effect as if cast by a mage of 12th level unless the bearer is already a wizard of higher level, in which case his or her level is used instead. In order from the back of the blade to its tip, the pieces and their powers are:

- **1. Hilt:** The bearer can cast *detect magic*, *jump*, *mending*, and *ESP* once each per day.
- **2. Quillons:** The bearer gains +2 on all saving throws vs. spell, spell-like powers, and magical item effects.
- 3. Blade Base (Thickest Blade Section): The bearer can cast *dispel magic* once per day.
- 4. Motto (Section Bearing the Words "Strike True" in Elvish): The bearer can cast *identify* once a day when the



bearer is touching a blade section to an item. The bearer does not temporarily lose any Constitution points or experience fatigue from this process.

- **5. Flat (Blade Section):** The bearer can unleash *chain lightning* once per day.
- 6. Run (Blade Section): The bearer is somewhat protected against all breath weapons and gases. The bearer receives a +2 bonus on all saving throws relating to breath weapons and gases, and all damage taken from these is lessened by 8 points per round. If this reduces the damage to zero or below, no damage results.
- **7. Strike (Blade Section):** The bearer gains immunity to all gaze attacks.
- 8. Fore (Blade Section): The bearer gains the saving throws of a mage of the same level as his or her own if they are more advantageous than his or her own. If the bearer is already a wizard, while in possession of the fore she or he effectively gains a level for purposes of making saving throws and memorizing and casting spells. If the fore leaves the possession of such a bearer the extra spells are forgotten and lost instantly.
- 9. Tip (Blade Section): The bearer gains a +6 attack and damage bonus on any one attack of any sort per day. The attack may be physical (melee or missile), used to aim a magical item, made through a spell, used to make a successful touch to have magic take effect, or even used to make a called shot.

The whereabouts of the nine pieces of the Shattered Sword are a matter of legend and conjecture, but the most likely locations are: somewhere in Undermountain beneath Waterdeep; in Myth Drannor; in the keeping of the Harpers, hidden somewhere in Twilight Hall in Berdusk; somewhere in one of the former royal holdings in Tethyr; in Silverymoon; lost somewhere in the Ring's Forest in central Cormyr; or hidden somewhere in the Citadel of the Raven. One piece is known to be in the refuge at the other end of the gate in Wright's Ferry in Featherdale. Finally, the tip was stolen from Everlund about 60 winters ago by unknown hands, and its present whereabouts are a complete mystery.

#### The Talking Bone

**XP Value:** 1,000 **GP Value:** 2,000

The Talking Bone appears to be an unremarkable leg bone from some herd animal. It radiates no aura of magic, but it allows anyone grasping it to speak with the orc god Gruumsh or to any other being that the grasper has touched with the bone at some previous time, as long as that being is on the same plane of existence as the grasper. The *Bone* affords unlimited, two-way, audio-only communication. Its quality is fine enough for distinct voices, tones, and mimicry to be recognized. The Bone also transmits sounds audible around the speakers; however, it can, if desired, be used at a whisper, and the sound from its other end will come out as quietly.

The *Talking Bone* is consecrated to Gruumsh and by his will resists all attempts to dispel its powers or to harm it. It automatically succeeds at all item saving throws and remains unaffected even by direct, deliberate attacks. Gruumsh prefers that it be in the possession of an orc shaman of his faith and sends orc champions to regain it if some other possesses it. (Note that these champions are guided to the rough location of the *Bone*, but not unerringly to its presence or to the being possessing it.)





# Spells 6Th-Level Priest Spell Dance of the Fallen (Evocation, Necromantic)

Sphere: Guardian, Necromantic

Range: 30 yards Components: V, S, M

Duration: 3 rounds/level

Casting Time: 9

Area of Effect: 5-foot- to 60-foot-diame-

ter cylinder that is 5 to 20 feet high

feet high

Saving Throw: Special

Dance of the fallen is used to capture, disarm, or force to flee or surrender foes to whom the caster has no wish to do lasting harm. A dance of the fallen calls up a whirling cloud of severed limbs, some bony and some still bearing flesh, but all bloodless. These remains are summoned from recent battlefields, and they rotate at high

speed around a central point, forming an immobile barrier. The plane of rotation of the body parts can be horizontal, vertical, or any angle in between the two. The area of effect of *dance of the fallen* is set mentally by the caster upon casting the spell (from as little as a 5-foot-diameter cylinder 5 feet tall or thick to as large as a 60-foot-diameter cylinder 20 feet tall or thick) and cannot be altered thereafter.

Any creature trying to pass through the barrier suffers 4d6 points of damage and must make a Constitution check to avoid being struck senseless. All fragile worn or carried items must make a successful item saving throw vs. crushing blow or be destroyed. Beings who insist on trying to cross through the *dance of the fallen* and are not rendered immediately unconscious take 1d3+2 rounds to cross the area of effect and must take damage and make Constitution checks each round.

Beings within the barrier's area of effect when it forms must make a saving throw vs. spell. If the saving throw succeeds, they escape the barrier by the most direct route and suffer no damage. If the saving throw fails, they suffer the full damage of the spell Any other intended action than leaving the area when the barrier is formed invites the full effects of the spell.

Only 25% of the damage done by dance of the fallen is permanent; the rest is temporary and returns after 1d4 hours are spent resting. Beings reduced to 0 hit points or below by this spell are rendered unconscious and ejected from the area of effect. They regain consciousness in 1d6 turns or more rapidly (1d6 rounds) if a successful healing proficiency check is made upon them. The cloud of limbs remains until the spell expires and then fades silently away It can also be dismissed instantly by the caster at any time.

The material component of this spell is a handful of bone shards or hair of any type.



# Appendix III:



he appendices and map keys of this guidebook are indexed here.

Only unusual river names appearing in the text are indexed. Military units and organizations that are arms of government are not indexed. Entries for the Zhentarim have been included under Zhentil Keep. Under the "Settlements" heading only places mentioned in the text that do not have their own guidebook entries appear unless an alternate former or nickname is being referenced.

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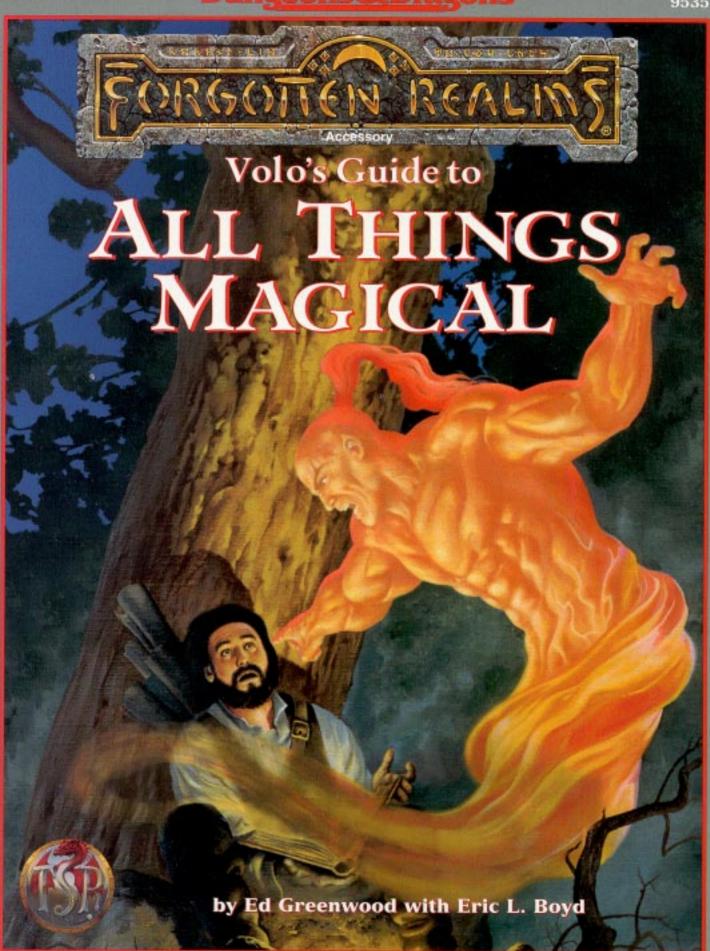
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As Edited and Amended by Elminster of Shadowdale (However Hard He Might Care to Deny It)

by Ed Greenwood with Eric L. Boyd

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#### Dedication

To Julia Martin, Steve Schend, and Eric Boyd for keeping the flame bright. And to Eric, again, for unlocking more shining secrets of the Realms for us all.

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Design: Ed Greenwood

Artifacts and original Magic in My Hand Design: Eric L. Boyd (additional design by Ed Greenwood)

Editing: Julia Martin

**Art Director:** Robert J. Galica **Cover Art:** Ciruelo Cabral

Interior Art: Tony Crnkovich, Ned Dameron, and Valerie Valusek

Typesetting: Nancy J. Kerkstra

Production: Heather Le May and Dee Barnett

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#### Lminster's Introduction



hat a pretentious title. Not even I would dare to pen something that purported to be a guide to all things magical. Volo did not even try. What he foisted upon Faerûnians hungry for enough secrets of magic to make them rulers of the

Realms was a grab bag full of odds and ends about the Art: notes about this and that, gossip, and distorted fragments of spells and processes copied from spellbooks on the sly or misremembered from brief glimpses snatched in places and on occasions when he dared not write anything down.

In the interests of reader safety, I was forced to spearhead an exhaustive search for every last copy of his masterpiece of horrors-I think we got them all-and then convince him of the error of his ways. Just about every other mage who had seen the work offered to help in this little task. After due passage of time, I agreed that something called Volo's Guide to All Things Magical (that title – what an arrogant longnose!) should become available across Faerûn, if only to stop greedy adventurers from getting themselves killed in the defenses of every mage's tower between Evermeet and Kara-Tur in an attempt to gain a copy of the work rumored to yet to survive. Yetmark ye—it was not going to be the same opus Volo fondly thought of as his great gift to all seekers after magic. I set to work on the only copy of the text remaining (safely kept up to that point in my library) to expunge the worst of his distortions and just plain errors in order to keep Faerûn from being overrun with uncontrolled elementals and worse summoned extraplanar beasts - to identify just one consideration.

And then, of course, a little minor surgery was necessary on what he got right. I really do not think the Realms would be better off without any wizards around to keep the beholders, dragons, drow, orc hordes, petty sword-swinging tyrants, insane Baneliches, and other evils at bay – and that is what would have happened if Volo's little list of carefully pilfered command words, phrases of activation, truenames, and the like had fallen into the hands of the inhabitants of wider Faerûn. Some things only the magically enlightened, whether wizards or priests, are meant to know - really! Accordingly, I considered just what delicate deletions to make and then went out and got a good sharp meat axe.

When a small pile of tattered scraps of parchment were all that remained of Volo's opus, I set to work restating his fumbling prose into understandable terms<sup>2</sup> and chopping the most irresponsible blow-up-all-Toril spells. What emerged is that which ye hold in your hands: a few fragments of useful material about magic. These are only the bones of Volo's colossus of magical revelation, but at least they are now the right bones to keep the thing standing up.

Spells found in other recently released volumes of Realms-1 ore, by the way, for the most part are not repeated herein unless substantial amplifications or corrections of earlier accounts are also included. With that said, the reader is warned that to act on much of the information in these pages is inherently dangerous and may even earn the dabbler some perilous foes. Moreover, much of the information herein<sup>4</sup> is dangerously wrong!

On the other hand, the revised work in your hands does have value as a source of ideas - a spur to the sorcerously creative, if ye will. A crucial part of the Art and any understanding of it is to recognize that there are many ways to achieve a desired effect or result, just as many cooks prepare the same dish in different ways. What Volo says herein may be a way of doing thus or so, but bear in mind that it is often (nay, usually) not the only way of doing it.

Priests will find some lore of practical use to them in this book, and mages who follow other paths to mastery of magic will find that what appears herein is almost wholly concerned with magic as practiced by humans dwelling in Faerûn. Thankfully, Volo resisted the temptation to set down wizard jokes in print, so none of them are perpetuated here.<sup>5</sup>

For all my work, this tome is still a grab bag of this and that and not a comprehensive guide at all. *That* is something that can probably never be written. Only the beings known to us as Mystra and Azuth could possibly encompass the subject, and I can conceive of nothing that would induce them to write a work that lays bare in a few pages what should take mortals a lifetime of careful study and experimentation to learn the paltry beginnings of.

To readers who trust in the sword or the dagger and hope to find in these pages a guide to how to lay mages low, I tender the following piece of very good advice: "Wizards? Avoid 'em. Life's better when ye're not a frog." That anonymous trail saying of the Sword Coast lands has been around a long, long time, but it is best never forgotten—if ye take my point.

Happy reading, then, dabblers in magic – and try to leave a little of the Realms still standing when ye are done, will ye not?



There aren't any left. Really. They're all gone. Elminster says he destroyed the last original after composing this work. Vellum burns remarkably well.

Elminster's terminology has, of course, been translated into Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® game terms.

Such as Pages From the Mages and The Seven Sisters.

How much? Just as much as each Dungeon Master desires!

It's not likely that Elminster would have let them survive to the final edition, in any case.



# The Secrets Laid Bare



olumes such as this one come along but once in a lifetime. You are wise indeed to have opened this tome after, I hope, laying down good coin for it—for your eyes now look upon more lore useful to spellcasters than can be found anywhere else in all Faerûn. Oh, there are more

powerful spells, and books that bristle with more of them, but this is the place where lore about the use of such magic appears. The reader of Volo's Guide to All Things Magical can gain a brief taste of the rich variety and manyfold complexity of the Art of wielding magic—at least, as human mages outside of secretive Thay and Halruaa practice it.

Writing this book almost got me killed—or worse, transformed into a helpless shape and placed in a spell-governed situation of endless torment where death would remain forever elusive, but the raw pain would make it desirable (or so a certain Catanarla the Crimson Cloaked, a sorceress of Telflamm, promised me). Many mages, it seemed, objected to my revelations of their pet spells, past peccadilloes, secret words, and names of power. Elminster and Khelben between them saw to it that I lived—though not before amusing themselves by delivering me into the claw—er, graceful hands of the Simbul, Witch-Queen of Aglarond, who demonstrated upon my person what the consequences of future unauthorized sorcerous journalism would be. It is not much fun to be thrust into bird form and forced to fly full-tilt into a stone wall, not to mention smelling all the hair burnt out of my head, along with other more—horrific—experiences.

I will not even open the subject of all the curses that are riding upon me as we speak, ready to strike if I do delve further into any means of revealing the secrets of sorcery. Suffice it to say that I am going to be a very good boy where dealings with wizards are concerned for a long time to come. They have promised me that.

This book of mine, however (suitably butcher—er, revised and embellished by the vigilant Elminster), will now see a wider audience than I had ever hoped it would, and *some*, at least, of the juicy secrets I uncovered will be shared with readers who are not all (I hope) crotchety old archwizards or liches already. So welcome, and read on: magnificent power and fascinating lore about it awaits thee, as old Elminster might say.<sup>1</sup>

This spot is perhaps the best place to touch on a few odd topics that do not fit anywhere else in this dissertation. They are but a few of the fascinating things I have learned about sorcery in Faerûn. Read on, and discover a whole book of them. It is my hope that my Faerûnian readers find this work both enjoyable and practical and that it goads them into at least investigating magic. Life for all in the Realms can only become richer and better if there are many folk who can wield a modest amount of magic rather than a few stunted old graybeards<sup>2</sup> who wield a lot!



## The Mage Fains

Many wild legends and tavern tales across the Realms mention these wild, spell-hurling occasions, and only a few of these stories exaggerate what goes on at a Mage Fair. These gatherings are open only to wizards, and the usually remote sites at which they are held are guarded by heavily spell-shielded guardian mages (often levitating)

who permit entry only to those who demonstrate an ability to cast spells.

Initially held once a decade, then every five years, and for a brief time every three summers, Mage Fairs are now annual affairs, their increasing frequency driven by the enormous rise in the numbers of competent mages in Faerûn during the current century. At a Mage Fair, mages of all backgrounds meet under the safety of an agreed-upon set of rules<sup>3</sup> to conduct business. They negotiate and sign contracts, nonaggression and territorial agreements, and research pacts, and they sell services, spells, training, enchanted items, rare material components, potions, and information. Young mages lusting after a reputation and elders desiring to attract followers or pupils show off their mastery of difficult or powerful spells, and would-be masters and would-be apprentices take their measures of each other, trying to find the right match. Several well-known mages in cities up and down the Sword Coast sell complex spell disguises (for 1,000 gp per layer, with the simplest having eight layers and most running to at least double that) for use by wizards who dare not attend a Mage Fair as themselves. (Wizards of any age or accomplishment seem to acquire enemies, or at least unscrupulous rivals, as easily as most of us breathe.)

Most readers will be unsurprised to learn that duels are common at Mage Fairs, and magical pranks even more numerous. Due to the nature of magic, both duels and pranks are apt to get out of hand, and Mage Fairs are therefore usually held in remote meadows or valleys, ruins, abandoned castles, and similar places where few folk dwell who might be terrorized—or driven to attack attendees of the fair. The only recent Mage Fair to be held in a settlement of any size took place over a dozen years ago in Derlusk, a port city in the Border Kingdoms. I do not know where the next Mage Fair will be held, but the Heralds will begin to spread the word a good year before the event, once the Magister decrees the site. A council of senior wizards organizes and decides the location of the fairs, but how one gets onto that governing body—or even who is on it—are secrets guarded, I am told, by no less than divine Azuth himself!

## The Well of Spells

This legendary site seems to move about from place to place in Faerûn at the will of Mystra. It is always found in a large cavern, but the cavern may be deep in Undermountain or the Underdark, high up in the heart of a lofty mountain, beneath the crumbling ruins of Myth Drannor, or half a hundred lesser fallen places. Apprentices in the Art and readers in Candlekeep who do not care to get any closer to magic than reading about it whisper excited tales of the Well of Spells to each other as they come across them in their readings, for it truly seems like a paradise for mages.

The Well is not a shaft or pit filled with water at all, but rather a vertical, cylindrical field of glowing golden light that marks the boundaries of its magic. Its diameter has varied from appearance to appearance, but it seems able to assume any diameter. Any wizard who finds and enters it is borne up by its enchantment, flying very slowly at MV 3 (A) in a random direction and for a random distance until the Well stops providing lift for him or her; the wizard floats slowly along, driven by force of will, but need not concentrate unduly on this movement so as to affect his or her other actions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Elminster: But, ye'11ll notice, had the good taste not to.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Elminster: Ahem. Pay no attention to the ranting man behind the curtain. . . .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Volo: Among other stipulations, the rules ban the use of teleportation and any casting of a combat spell outside of a formal demonstration or duel.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Elminster: Correct. Overcoming my astonishment at witnessing Volo cleaving to the truth, I'm bound to add that a rather fanciful account of a visit to one fair appears in the TSR anthology Realms of Valor in the tale "Elminster at the Mage Fair."

Elminster: This is true, but why the Well exists in the first place is something I've never managed to learn from Mystra.





Lord Secotha Amraster Lionsfriend, protected from scrying, investigates a magical cache in his hideaway

If this is the mage's first visit to the Well, she or he is confronted in its glowing heart by a monster materialized by the Well. All sorts of beasts have been reported to have shown up, but neither they nor the mages they attack can employ magic or psionics while inside the Well. If a wizard flees from the Well, this monster pursues, but if the mage slays the beast within the Well by physical means, she or he is instantly granted full knowledge and use of a spell new to him or her. The spell is never be one that is wished for, but seems to be always determined randomly—it may even be of a level or school normally denied to the mage and still be successfully used by him or her at no penalty. This mystically granted spell is gained as an extra spell and carried in addition to the wizards usual roster. Its casting never requires material components.

Note that if a mage flees or is hurled forth from the Well and defeats the monster outside it, no spell is gained. Reentry into the Well calls forth another monster for the wizard to face. The Well lands the wizard and ceases to allow him or her to fly if the wizard leaves the Well while fleeing the monster or after the wizard gains the random spell.

The Well has no top or bottom. A wizard reaching its uppermost reaches is transported instantly to the bottom, and vice versa. Any number of sorcerers can be in the Well at the same time and can see and speak to each other, but they cannot strike at or pass items to each other, since each wizard and all of his or her possessions seem intangible to other wizards in the Well. Missiles fired into the Well reach its edges and stop, hanging frozen in its radiance, but they can readily be retrieved by anyone reaching into the radiance.

If a wizard has entered the Well before, all that is gained by reentering it is a vision of a being, place, or item of importance to the mage. This sub-

ject is not necessarily something the mage is interested in or desires to see, and the vision is often cryptic in its relevance. Beings who are not wizards are not affected by the Well or its monsters. They can see its radiance, but it does not cause them to float or affect them in any way, except to remove *charm* spells, curses (including lycanthropyy), *geas* spells, and other magical controls and compulsions existing upon them at the time of contact. This power of the Well can affect the same nonwizard beings again and again if they find and enter the Well repeatedly.

## Hideaways

Across Faerûn, many scores of extradimensional chambers or complexes of rooms known as hideaways or safeholds exist. Here I recount only descriptions of a few of these hidden places, but it should be noted that Chessenta and Turmish are said to be positively riddled with them. They are said to feature so many of these hideaways that a military invasion of either country would be imperiled from the outset by the ability of defenders to hide away in the heart of an invading army, striking at leisure from concealment.

The construction of such hidden lairs was evidently greatly in fashion in the dangerous days of human dominance in Faerûn in the centuries after the fall of Myth Drannor, but many of the spells used to construct these areas, which typically have magically concealed and operated entries, have since been lost or become secrets hoarded carefully by liches and perhaps a few living mages. Some of these safeholds are clearly retreats for desperate warriors to hide in, but others are just as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Elminster: Let it be known here and now that I am not one of them. I suspect that—aside from a few wizards who have passed into a lich state—the secrets of making safeholds died with those human mages who perished after the fall of Myth Drannor. Certain elves in Evermeet may still know the necessary castings, but no one in Halruaa or Thay does (despite what they may pretend to be able to do).



plainly cozy corners for wizards to study in at their leisure or caches for merchants to employ in the safe storage of coins, food, and trade wares.

Gaining entrance to most safeholds involves the speaking of a certain word or the possession of a magical key item, but all hideaways share the necessity for a person attempting to enter them occupying a precise location to effect entry. I know of one hideaway that is reached by leaping in a certain direction off the top of the Standing Stone in the Dales at a certain time of day. If one avoids falling injury by making the correct leap, one enters a dark, echoing labyrinth of chambers guarded by at least a dozen beings that resemble liches. The deepest chamber is rumored to contain a spell library, but other tales insist that the innermost chamber holds a stair into the Underdark, a *gate* to the Outer Planes, or even a cache of treasure put there by the Cult of the Dragon.

Another known hideaway is entered from inside a certain ruined, once-magnificent building in Myth Drannor by means of a magical key, at least a dozen of which are known to exist. This safehold is a single chamber furnished with spellbooks, a wardrobe, a *Murlynd's spoon*, a bowl, a *decanter of endless water*, magically preserved food, and a comfortable armchair complete with a footrest! Anyone trying to remove any of the spellbooks or enchanted items is instantly attacked by the fully operating eyes of a death tyrant! that open in the chamber walls, floor, and ceiling—but this guardian is not otherwise seen. The maker of this hideaway remains unknown, though many mages who have spent a night there and found it a safe refuge in the heart of Myth Drannor's dangers swear that they felt as if someone were examining their memories, knowledge, and the spells ready in their minds—although no host otherwise betrayed his or her presence.

A third hideway is thought to exist somewhere in the heart of Athkatla in Amn. It is used by a secret society of unscrupulous merchants to hide stolen items, smuggled goods, kidnap victims, hired slayers, and unsavory evidence from the eyes of the general populace. Local legend has dubbed this place "the Nighthole" because its owners only enter it during the hours of darkness.

Making permanent extradimensional lairs requires not only entrance-cloaking and entrance-locking spells, but also magical means of heating or cooling and circulating fresh air through the interior. Some hideaways even have facilities that magically remove personal waste (presumably to a locale not traceable to the hidden lair) and many have back doors or several entrances. Both Castle Waterdeep and Piergeiron's Palace in Waterdeep are rumored to have safehold chambers, and the Palace of the Purple Dragon in Suzail definitely has on—stuffed with the bones of would-be usurpers, if tales of the deeds of some Obarskyr kings are to be believed.

## The Sorceress in Gray

A persistent and widespread legend in the Sword Coast and the North on both sides of Anauroch is that mages who face peril alone are sometimes visited in their hour of greatest need by an unspeaking, ghostly image of a tall, graceful lady in robes. This apparition can heal injuries and restore cast and forgotten spells with her tingling touch. Supposedly, those who dare to gaze into her eyes see visions to guide them here and now, I have been unable to see this apparition myself or otherwise confirm these tales. Any reader who can is urged to contact me.

- <sup>7</sup> Elminster: Some in behavior, some in appearance.
- <sup>8</sup> A death tyrant is an undead beholder and is described in the Monstrous Manual<sup>TM</sup> tome.
- Elminster: This legend is also truth, but I am forbidden to tell ye who the lady is or the extent of her powers-save to say that she is neither Mystra nor the Magister.



The Sorceress in Gray aids the wounded Lady Keira Morgana, Wyvernslayer.







# The Magic of Guardianship



lmost as many traps, defensive spells, and misdirectional magics guard the towers, lesser abodes, and storage caches of powerful mages as there are mighty wizards around to create them. *Contingency* magics guard those who can cast them—or afford the services of other casters—against death

and calamity, and even the lowliest wizards paint impressive but powerless symbols on things and cast *magic mouth* spells in profusion in an attempt to cow would-be thieves into seeking safer goods to make off with. A definitive guide to all traps and wards used by mages—from the glowing but false spellbook that is the counterweight of a falling bag of boulders to the *chain contingency*- linked multiple *meteor swarms* of certain archmages' tombs that slaughter intruders in entire networks of false burial chambers—is something I doubt any mortal could pen. Here I have set forth some brief notes and spells gathered from my own observations of spellhurlers.

### Construction Materials

It seems half of Faerûn now knows that gorgon's blood in the mortar and stucco of a building prevents astral and ethereal travel into or out of it and that lead sheeting or strong concentrations of lead in rock foils scrying magics, but there is far more to be learned. To be effective, the gorgon's blood must be in a solution of one drop to a pint of water or stronger and must be applied so that no area of the external walls larger than a large man's head is untouched by it. Xorn or medusa blood can be used instead, but it must be applied in the following complex formula: three drops of xorn blood or four drops of medusa blood *and* two drops of unholy water per pint of water. Needless to say, the second formula is not used within upon buildings belonging to or used by good or (most) neutral faiths.

Translocational travel, such as teleport spells, can be prevented by magical items such as *weirdstones*<sup>1</sup> or by the presence of sufficient Underdark radiation (strange emanations from certain rocks in which the metal arandur is found). <sup>2</sup> These radiations fade swiftly if the rock containing them is exposed to sunlight, but if taken to the surface on moonless nights or cloaked in magical darkness, the ore can be used as a rubble filler within double walls to foil teleporters. Be warned that certain preservative spells not known to me, wondrous web spells, and magics that melt the rubble into a flowing, briefly molten mass must be used to make the protection of the radiations both continuous and long-lasting. Even with such precautions, use of Underdark ores is notorious for leaving as the turtle soup fanciers of Neverwinter say, "gaps in the shell," so that *teleportation* is difficult and its destinations restricted, but complete prohibition rarely gained.

I am told that when mixed with mortar, a solution of three drops of giant slug spittle, two drops of remorhaz ichor, and (as a base) a flask of amberjet poison prevents the entry of all slimes, molds, jellies, cubes, and other amorphous, creeping, corrosive monsters into a building or over a wall whose stones are set with this substance. I have not seen the precise formula, but I have been assured by several sages and merchants, as well as a mage I trust,<sup>3</sup> that it is preserved at Candlekeep and that the mixture works because it is abhorrent to these creatures rather than a damaging magical or biological barrier to them.

### Spells

Magic is far more commonly used for the defense of temples and wizards' homes than the aforementioned construction materials with the attendant hard work necessary to implement them. Most mages are familiar with the guards and wards spell. Its clerical equivalents are all the secrets of the various churches' priesthoods, so I will not discuss them here—to reveal such things means sure death if the church one has offended can reach one.

As readers of my guides to various regions of the Realms know, the ward-mist spell is a popular defense in the Sword Coast lands, especially in the Sword Coast North." The crafting of wardings began in the North, probably in ancient Netheril. Ancient wards often include wild magical effects and prohibitions against magical items, which simply cannot enter the wardmist. There are also instances of prohibitions against spells of a specific school or those manifesting as heat, fire, lightning, or cold. Many sorts of monsters and spells—I ran into something very nasty known as a guardian whirlwind just the other day<sup>5</sup>—can be linked to wardmist spells to battle intruders. Some old wards incorporate reverse gravity effects or huge blade barriers.

The boundaries, guardian monsters, and other properties of a ward cannot be changed once it is cast—and therein lies a weakness of *wardmists*. Only a single *wardmist* can exist in a given area, and safe entry and egress from such wards is provided by means of tokens—specific objects made of a certain material and bearing a certain rune to link them to the *wardmist*. Thus, ward tokens are like keys, and though they cannot be readily copied as keys can, they are often stolen. Well-known shops in all the cities of Sembia, Athkatla, Baldur's Gate, Calimport, Luskan, Mulmaster, Myratma, Waterdeep, Westgate, and Zazesspur—plus many lesser-known or more prudently covert establishments—do a brisk trade in stolen tokens.

A second line of defense often employed by mages, priests, or those able to hire them, when they know that ward tokens have fallen into the wrong hands or that capable and unfriendly adventurers may come calling is the use of so-called *wandering* wards: *glyph* and *symbol* spells that cause their harmful runes to move about from place to place within an abode in order to block intruders who seek to evade such things. A third means of harming unwanted visitors is by means of enchantments on doors or doorways<sup>6</sup> I am still engaged in researches on the effects of such enchantments, but I have included here a rare but very useful spell, *web of ways*, that can render magical door traps far more dangerous than they usually are.

#### Wizard Guardianship Spells

7th Level

Wardmist

(Wiz 7; Evocation, Alteration, Enchantment/Charm)

Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 hour
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

- Volo: Weirdstones are detailed in The Magic of Movement chapter of this treatise, though I have not yet managed to learn how they are made.
- <sup>2</sup> More information on arandur is found in the Raw Materials: Metals section of The Magic of Items chapter.
- <sup>3</sup> Elminster: Do ye now? Silly lad—but I thank thee for the compliment. 'Tis like being complimented by a stone block, though. . .
- <sup>4</sup> The wardmist spell has many variations and refinements. It is also discussed in Volos Guide to the North and Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast. Cormyrean refinements on wardmist are covered in Volo's Guide to Cormyr.

5Guardian whirlwind is a spell about which Volo has been unable to obtain the precise details. It creates a vortex of whirling air that traps any man-sized or smaller creature on the spot until they manage a successful bend bars/lift gates roll to escape. Unlike most bend bars/lift gates attempts, one such roll may be made per round. A guardian whirlwind buffets a victim for 1 point of damage per round. Volo has seen the bones of people and creatures who died in these traps whirling endlessly around in such vortices.

<sup>6</sup>Many such enchantments are summarized on a card included in the Ruins of undermountain boxed set. Other cards in that set detail traps and yet other defensive features.



The caster must stand in an area that will become part of the ward and visualize the route of the desired ward boundary. An area of 600 square feet per level of the caster may be enclosed. If the wizard tries to enclose too large an area, the spell fails and is wasted. Wizards casting simultaneous wardmists may combine their protections.

The spell creates a *wardmist*. This is a 30-foot-high, 60-foot-wide band of permanent, milky-white mist that must rest on the ground, floor, or other solid surface. (It need not be level) The area protected by the ward is measured from the inner edge of the *wardmist*. The thickness of the mist is not included. The ward extends 40 feet beneath the surface of the ground and may be narrower than 60 feet in width wherever desired. Its boundaries can twist and turn corners as sharply and as often as desired to protect a certain area, and they may exclude whatever areas the caster desires. Once cast, a *wardmist* cannot be moved.

A *wardmist* can always be freely entered or left. Beings entering it are sensed by the spell, which reacts by flashing a radiant or audible warning (or both, as desired) to a specific spot or being. The spot or being is set upon casting, and it cannot be changed thereafter. Such a warning would still function in the location of a destroyed room—even in midair—or inside the tomb of a dead being.

Warnings classify those who enter the *wardmist* into two categories: those who bear ward tokens and intruders. *Wardmist* warnings transmit numbers and general locations of all intruders.

Sight and all known magical and psionic means of scrying do not work through the boundaries of a *wardmist*. A being in the mist can see through the mist to a distance of about 10 feet in darkness and 40 feet when light is present. One cannot see out of the mist though, even if one is only inches away from its edge. One cannot see out of the mist to either the area it excludes or the area it encloses. A *wardmist* can be seen *over* freely by anyone tall enough or stationed high enough to be able to do so.

When visibility is reduced by darkness, intruders in a *wardmist* who do not use lamps, markers, or other means of proceeding in a straight path will move in a random direction each round of movement in which they fail a secret Intelligence ability check. It is possible to wander, lost, in a *wardmist* for quite some time.

The caster of a *wardmist* spell can try to link certain types of magically animated or undead monsters to the ward as it is forming to serve as guardian monsters. To become guardians, these monsters must be present, and must fail a saving throw vs. spell.

When an intruder reaches a certain locale in a *wardmist* or has been in the mist for a set time, some guardian monsters are teleported to within 20 feet of the intruder. The types and numbers of guardian monsters are set by the initial *wardmist* spell but are limited by the available stable of guardians. Their typical orders are to attack and destroy all intruders, although some may be instructed to subdue, disarm, and capture while dealing as little damage as possible.

Guardian monsters are kept in stasis by the wardmist when not active. They do not age, heal, or eat. They become inactive 2d4 rounds after an intruder is slain or leaves the warded area. A guardian monster can be healed at any time by application of the proper potions or spells. A destroyed guardian is forever gone. It cannot be resurrected or replaced by the wardmist spell. Monsters can be unleashed to wander in an existing wardmist, but to be linked to and teleported about by the ward, they must be part of the initial wardmist casting. Only the types of magically created or undead monsters listed in the boxed text at left can be linked to a wardmist, although individual mages may have successfully modified their wardmist spells to augment this list. Tales exist of wards defended by golems and even by undead titans.

Mages may combine their efforts when creating a *wardmist* so as to give it multiple sets of guardians of the same or different types. Each mage casts a *wardmist* spell at the same time, though only one ward is created, and it is set to a single sort of ward token.

A few wards are linked to more powerful guardians, such as liches assisted by robed and hooded skeletons (to look like other liches or

mages). These skeletons are imbued with spell ability to cast combat spells and have *magic mouths* cast on them to allow them to "speak." They act as decoys and are used to identify spellcasting intruders to their lich. There are even reports of multiple invisible stalkers linked to a *wardmist* – each being freed from servitude in Toril after they slay a certain number of intruders.

A wardmist does not seem to exist for a being who carries the proper token. Ward tokens must be made of a certain material, and they must bear a certain rune that is drawn while a secret word is uttered. The material, the rune, and the word are all set during the ward's casting, and they cannot be changed thereafter. For convenience, tokens to a particular ward are usually of a common shape and size, but the wardmist recognizes anything of the right material that bears the right rune. Some ward tokens have been inset into the pommels of swords, for instance, or baked into clay jugs or statuettes. In some large holdings, warders carry rings of varying tokens just as they do rings of keys. Tokens can be made freely after the casting of a wardmist — but the requirements for a valid token cannot be changed without using another wardmist spell.

A being bearing a valid token cannot see or be affected by a wardmist and is not subject to attacks by any guardian monsters linked to the *ward-mist*. An intruder who seizes a valid token from another being, even while in battle with a guardian, is instantly free of such guardian monster attacks.

Only one *wardmist* spell can exist in a given area. If a *dispel magic* is cast on a *wardmist*, it increases visibility around the caster by 20 feet, delays the appearance of any guardian monsters by a round, and sets off an immediate warning. Only a *limited wish* or *wish* can destroy a *wardmist*. Even repeated *dispel magics* will fail, and an *anti-magic shell* cannot form within a *wardmist*. If this is attempted, the *anti-magic shell* is wasted, and the *wardmist* is unaffected.

The most common addition to a *wardmist* is a band of armed human guards assigned to respond to the magic's warnings. *Spell triggers* are also popular. These are spells that have specific preset conditions to set them off; they then launch the effects of other "hanging" spells, also cast earlier.

The material components of this spell are an amount of silver larger in total volume than the caster's fist, phase spider silk, and three powdered pieces of amber of no less than 500 gp value each. Other material components may be required if unusual spells or monsters are to be linked to the wardmist.

Typical Wardmist Guardian Monsters

d8	Number & Type of Monsters
1	2d6 baneguards* (MCA1)
2	1d3 blazing bones† (MCA1)
3	2d8 bonebats*
4	3d4 helmed horrors* (MCA1)
5	3d4 skeletons or 2d4 monster skeletons (MM)
6	1d2 watchghosts‡
7	1d2 wraiths (MM)
8	2d12 zombies (MM)

Monsters marked with an asterisk (\*) appear in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting box. Those appearing in the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ game accessory are denoted by "MM," and those in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual volumes have the volume number appended to the abbreviation "MCA." Those marked with a dagger (†) appear in the Ruins of Myth Drannor boxed set. A diesis (‡) denotes those in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set DMs lacking a particular source should substitute another monster from the list.

Web of Ways (Wiz 7; Alteration, Conjuration Summoning)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 3 turns

Area of Effect: Two to seven doors or doorways

Saving Throw: None



This spell is cast on two to seven doors or doorways located within a 1-mile-radius sphere, all of which must be touched by the caster during the casting of the spell. *Web of ways* has one of two effects. If one or none the doors or doorways bear no enchantments of their own, this spell causes beings passing through any of its effected doors or doorways to be whisked via a *teleport without error* journey to the destination reached by another of the seven doors, either at random or in a set substitution dictated by the nature of the beings attempting to pass through the doors, the equipment they carry, and/or the direction of their travel. Such set sequences and the variables that control them are fixed through specific conditions set during the spell's casting and unalterable thereafter, in the same way as the activation of a *magic mouth* spell is set. This use of this spell is permanent.

If two or more doors or doorways do carry enchantments (even temporary or one-shot magics), this spell causes their magic to be translocated from one door to another in a similar random or predetermined way established during the spells casting as described above under the first use of the spell. If a door's magic is later exhausted, it remains part of the rotation until the magic of all but one door is gone, which ends the spell.

The first or second use of a *web of ways* spell can also be shattered by casting *dispel magic* on all of its doors and doorways. The caster of a web of ways spell is rendered immune to the translocation effects and to all enchantments on the doors involved.

The material components of this spell are an arachnid with seven legs, any item that has been previously transported by a *teleport* or *dimension door* spell, and one rock crystal of at least 25 gp value for every door or doorway to be involved in the spell.

#### 9th Level

#### Wandering Symbol

(Wiz 9; Alteration, Conjuration/Summoning, Invocation/Evocation)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 2 turns
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is cast to include two to nine different surfaces located within a 1-mile-radius sphere, all of which must be touched by the caster during the casting of the spell. This enchantment creates two magical symbols of the types described in the 8th-level *symbol* spell and having all of the properties of those writings save that the caster cannot trigger and is immune to all effects of his or her own *symbols*. In addition, *wandering symbols* are not stationary. They can move by themselves to one of the up to nine different surfaces touched during casting. (If less than nine spots are touched, less than nine are utilized.) Except initially, when the *symbols* must appear at two different spots, each of the chosen surfaces can hold one or both of the *symbols*.

Wandering symbols stay at specified surfaces until triggered to go to others or move about from designated surface to surface at random. Nonrandom appearance sequences and conditions are set at the time of the spell's casting and cannot later be changed. Triggered symbols deal their usual damage to intruders activating them and are spent in doing so. A wandering symbol spell is not ended by the discharge of only one of its symbols, and the symbols can be commanded to keep apart during casting, so that only one ever appears in a given location. The expenditure of all symbols in a wandering symbol spell or a dispel magic successfully cast on all of the symbol locations set in its casting ends the spell.

The nine surfaces (often doors) set during spellcasting become "sensors" for the spell. The *symbols* can be called to a locale when one of the

surfaces designated by the spell detects either the approach of a creature of a certain alignment; the discharge of magic in an adjacent area that is not sourced in the caster of the *wandering symbols* spell; or the approach of any creature who does not bear a certain token, wear a certain uniform or badge, or speak a certain password.

For *each* of the surface locations the *wandering symbols* is to be able to travel among, the material components of this spell are a *sweet water* potion, gem dust from translucent crushed gemstones (of one color or colorless) worth not less than 1,000 gp, and powdered black opal worth not less than 1,000 gp.

#### Priest Guardianship Spell

5Th Level

Wandering Glyphs (Pr 5; Abjuration, Evocation)

Sphere: Guardian
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is cast to include two to six different surfaces located within a 1-mile-radius sphere, all of which must be touched and outlined with burning incense by the caster during the casting of the spell as in the 3rd-level priest *glyph of warding* spell. *Wandering glyphs* creates two *glyphs* of the same type as those created by a glyph of *warding*<sup>7</sup> spell; the *glyphs* have all of the properties of normal *glyphs of warding* save that the caster cannot trigger and is immune to all effects of his or her own *glyphs of warding*. In addition, *wandering glyphs* are not stationary. They can move by themselves to one of the up to six different surfaces touched during casting, though they can never both be in the same place. (If less than six spots are touched, less than six are utilized.)

The time required to cast the spell is equal to the time required to trace the areas desired to be protected by the *glyphs*. This time is equal to 1 round for every 5 square feet of area to be protected. A caster can protect at each of up to six locations an area equal to a square the sides of which are equal to his or her level in feet. The casting of this spell may in no case exceed 8 hours.

Wandering glyphs stay at specified surfaces until triggered to go to others or move about from designated surface to surface at random. Nonrandom appearance sequences and conditions are set at the time of the spell's casting and cannot later be changed. Triggered glyphs deal their usual damage to intruders activating them and are spent in doing so. A wandering glyph spell is not ended by the discharge of only one of its glyphs, and the glyphs can be commanded to keep apart during casting, so that only one ever appears in a given location. The expenditure of all glyphs in a wandering glyph spell ends the spell.

The six surfaces (often doors) set during spellcasting become "sensors" for the spell. The *glyphs of warding* can be called to a locale when one of the surfaces designated by the spell detects either the approach of a creature of a certain alignment; the discharge of magic in an adjacent area that is not sourced in the caster of the *wandering glyphs* spell; or the approach of any creature who does not bear a certain token, wear a certain uniform or badge, or speak a certain password.

The material components of this spell are enough incense to trace the areas to be protected, a drop of holy (or unholy) water for each location, and a black opal worth at least 250 gp. If any location to be protected exceeds 50 square feet, the locations must also be sprinkled with at least 2,000 (total) gp worth of powdered diamond.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Some glyphs are detailed in the Pages From the Mages sourcebook, aside from the general guidelines given in the Player's Handbook.







# The Magic of Items



t has been said that one of the defining characteristics of a wizard is paranoia: the suspicion that most other living things in Faerûn are against you, watching and preparing for the best chance to strike you down when you are asleep, hurt, under attack from

another foe, or otherwise vulnerable. Whatever the truth in this belief, many mages do feel this way. I should know—I am one of them.

Accordingly, most mages start to look for ways to defend themselves. Their suspicions tend to make them uneasy when it comes to trusting servants, so they either make or try to establish unshakable magical control over their own servitor creatures or try to acquire items that store magic, often in unusual or disguised shapes, to be unleashed later. Such items are always difficult and expensive to make, usually soon exhausted in their powers, and in constant short supply. Their rarity is due in part to the fact that most of them can be wielded by anyone who knows how, thus offering nonspellwielders their only chance to ever command magic.

So, many mages make their own magical items - or at least try to make their own. It is rare to find a clear and complete set of instructions on how to make an item thoughtfully written down by a wizard, because the same suspicions that most wizards harbor about the world1 lead them to hide any writings they make, encrypt or deliberately distort what is written, and even split their writings into different formats and hiding places so that all pieces must be assembled for the process to work and as many pieces as possible are dangerous to anyone following what they say in isolation. For example, an item involving the summoning of an elemental might have its process split into a fragment that takes the follower to the point of bringing an uncontrolled elemental to his or her presence, a second fragment that describes governing the elemental through what it is needed for and then releasing it from all control, and a third fragment that details how that elemental can be safely dismissed. Any mage lacking that third fragment is placed in great danger by following the writings.

It is also true that in the making of potions and items, perhaps more than in any other aspect of sorcery, there are many ways to achieve a desired end: One mage's *wand of magic missiles* may be made in a very different way than the same item made by another sorcerer, even though this is a relatively simple, straightforward item.<sup>2</sup>

Typically, the making of an item begins with design, some experimentation follows, and then comes the refinement of the design until a mage believes she or he has hit upon a workable process.<sup>3</sup> And then, as the old saying goes, "Chaos storms in."

Simple (single function) items may be made by casting an *enchant an item* spell on a suitable physical object, usually one made to the finest specifications and specifically to receive an enchantment. Then the necessary spells to preserve the item,

imbue it with a power, and establish control over it are cast into the charged object. Items with multiple effects—even something as simple as a classic *wand of lightning*, which can emit forked or straight bolts or instead unleash its powers in a shock attack—tend to be more stable and to have more chance of operating properly when done if constructed by a more complex process. Most wizards make very few permanent items in their lives, and the necessary time, trouble, and expense of such processes—not just the weakening of Constitution involved in working a *permanency* spell—are important reasons why.

In this guide, I present a sample method for the making of a multifunction magical item modeled in part on craftings I participated in when training under Raedolphyn of Starmantle and upon several processes I observed in the towers of various mages in Baldur's Gate, Saerloon, Telflamm, Tsurlagol, and Yhaunn. Examination of this method should yield suggested routes for crafters of magical items to follow in the making of other items.

## The Effects of Overenchantment

It has been observed that some wizards become distant, withdrawn, and even mentally unstable over time. Although there can be many reasons for such behavior, if it is accompanied by occasional wild magic results from proper castings of normal spells and by a shadowy or vaguely blurred appearance to the spell-caster's body, it is probably spell hollowing brought on by too much enchanting of items in too short a time. The susceptibility of mages to this condition varies with the individual, but all mages should beware it, for a spell-hollowed mage who comes into contact with the wrong combination of spells can be transformed into a wizshade.<sup>4</sup>

### Item Entrapment

One of the classic horror stories among wizards (told by many a mage to keep the least bold of his or her apprentices from unauthorized rummaging) is the tale of an item sucking the essences of any living beings touching it into itself. Such trap items do exist, often created by liches or would-be liches to gain themselves younger, fresher bodies, but they are not as common as legend would have you believe. (Incidentally, to bring any such item into a Mage Fair is grounds for disintegration on the spot.)

It has long been suspected that Szass Tam, Zulkir of Necromancy in Thay, has established several such items in his various holds and towers as traps for ambitious Red Wizards seeking to unseat him and adventurers hired to destroy him. The royal bedchamber in Castle Tethyr once sported a glowing, jeweled broad sword that floated enticingly above its own purple-cushioned

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Volo: Most wizards are specially suspicious of their own apprentices, who are nearer to them and privy to more of their secrets than other living beings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Elminster: This cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Any guide to enchanting an item is merely that: a guide. Skilled spellcasters, both wizardly and clerical, devise their own ways of making items and so come to deeply understand the magic they wield.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A definitive overview of the necessary game elements of enchanting items appears in Chapter 4: Creating Magical Items in the Dungeon Master® Option: High-Level Campaigns AD&D® game sourcebook. Note that while the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting does not use all the optional rules in this volume, this chapter is generally accepted as canon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Wizshades are detailed in The Magic of the Person chapter.



plinth beside the canopied regal bed. It is known to have claimed the wits of several would-be assassins, whose drained, lifeless bodies were found collapsed beside the plinth on several mornings down through the decades. Where it came from and where it has gone to are both mysteries lost in the history of strife-torn Tethyr, which only recently has come out from under its long civil war, but at some time previous to the struggles, the Sword of Doom vanished from the bedchamber.

Doors that accomplish the same fell end are rumored to be in use in Halruaa, and legends insist that at least one noble family of Waterdeep-the house of Zoar, now outcast-had a door that operated with such powers only when specially activated. This deadly portal made rivals vanish during seemingly innocent feasts and meetings held in House Zoar.

More common are "trap" items willingly entered by wizards and priests who have prepared them as hiding places or instruments to preserve their essential selves in bids for immortality through lichdom or other means. It should be noted that most humans lack the strength of will and depth of experience to keep from going insane in the experience of so transferring their consciousness to a storage item. The archmage Nathaglas of Tashluta once described the experience and its dangers as: "A dark, detached confinement, where there is no sound but your own screaming, and nothing to be seen but your own memories in an ongoing display. This replay of memory can all too easily descend into obsession and mad repetition of favorite moments to the exclusion of all else-including sanity." Mages contemplating a stay in such a vessel should seek training and experience in dream magic or obtain means to gaining farsensing to guard against the deleterious effects of self-induced oblivion.

# The Enchantment of ITems

Even young children in the Realms-if they pay any attention at all to the tales their elders spin by firesides and over tankards) know the basics of how wizards and priests imbue items-inanimate, often quite normal objects-with the eternal fire of magic, making them mighty and valuable things that can last for centuries and serve many hands to work major changes on the Realms. But few folk, even among experienced wizards and priests of high rank and long, devoted service, know the specifics of enchanting anything beyond a simple single-use or one-function item (that is, making an item that can do more than duplicate the effect of a single spell). Priests can pray to their deities for guidance. In fact, they had better do so if they contemplate crafting anything beyond simple potions or wardstones, as most deities take a dim view of mortals who act on their own without divine consultation while professing to diligently serve a deity. But wizards are on their own, save perhaps for occasional moments of insight sent through the grace of Mystra or Azuth and prefaced by

This is, in the view of many other inhabitants of Faerûn, a good thing. The lack of clear, widely known, safe instructions causes accidents that remove some of the most ambitious and dangerous wizards from the Realms. It also helps to slow the remaining sorcerers down in any wholehearted effort to produce items by forcing them to spend much time in experimentation and in the procurement of rare, hard-to-find, and often ultimately unnecessary ingredients.

Despite years of searching, I have been unable to find a complete, clear, fully detailed account of the making of a complex item. Such things are too well disguised and guarded by their owners. I have, however, unearthed scores of fragmentary processes, several chests worth of cryptic notes, and some talkative learned priests, liches, archliches, and baelnorns who could explain things. Adding these aids to my own admittedly paltry experience as a wizard,6 I am now prepared to reveal in these pages two sample processes for the enchantment of a complex magical item.7

So read on, and learn something that a few armies of wizards have died seeking knowledge about down through the ages. All spells mentioned in the process that are not already widely known are detailed fully at the end of the relevant example (wizard or priest).8 Bear in mind that the presented process is a general outline, not an ironclad one true way.

## Beginnings

The process of making a complex magical item begins with an initial plan for what the item will do and preparation of the necessary focal stones: gems that hold the spell powers of the item until its component magics are combined into a coherent, controllable whole. (The types of gems that are used in magical item construction, including those that make the best focal stones, are detailed a later section of this chapter.) The necessary spells to create the effects the future item will release are gathered or researched. Note that what spells can be best adapted may be a matter of some speculation and is not necessarily clear-cut and definite at this point-and mistakes made at the outset can doom an otherwise well-conceived item.

# Primary Casting

When sufficient spells and focal stones have been gathered, the wizard or priest governing the process casts, or hires others to cast, the desired spells into the focal stones by means of dweomerflow spells that link the cast spells to the stones. In rare cases, minor magical items may be magically miniaturized and enchanted so as to be encased within a spell-generated focal stone. They can then be made part of a larger item-though it should be noted that such cobbled-together items are never as stable as one generated from the raw and are generally mis-

Abeyance spells are then cast on the focal stones to hold the enchantments within them for a indefinite time while the rest of the item creation process is carried out. Many priests and wizards across the Realms have caches of focal stones that they have been adding to for years as they await the proper time, sufficient wealth, or the procurement of other ingredients necessary to create the finished items they envisage.

Elminster: Best estimates set its disappearance at 1342 DR.

Elminster: Would that Volo spoke truth this plainly a little more often.

Elminster: Sigh. So cease thy preening and get on with it, overclever jackanapes. My ingested viands grow restive. Elminster: Translated artfully by myself into terms ye can deal with, of course.



## Shell Creation

The physical form of the item is then planned. It can be an existing item or several items magically melded together if such are properly purified, but more often it is a newly created item crafted of magically prepared materials. If an item is to be made permanent, as is most common with multifunction items, it is important that inorganic substances—such as gems, metals, or stone—predominate in volume over organic components in the created shell. The exceptions to this principle are wood—or rather certain woods which have an affinity for enchantment—and items primarily concerned with necromancy, which can have bone as their principal component.

Most staves, wands, and rods are made of wood, as the old saying goes:

Of these three are great magic born, With silver cut: oak, ash, and thorn.

To these famous three woods, known in many magic-using planes and worlds, can be added certain Faerûnian varieties: blueleaf, calantra, chime oak, duskwood, felsul, hiexel, laspar, phandar, shadowtop, silverbark, suth, vundwood, weirwood, and zalantar. The "silver cut" of the saying refers to the fact that wood intended for magical uses can be carved with anything, but should be initially felled or severed from its living tree with a silver-bladed implement such as an axe, hatchet, saw, adz, or sickle.

To be used to construct an item, inorganic principal components of an item must have been affected by or in contact with a similar type of magic as one of the properties the finished item is intended to produce or command—for example, energy discharge, healing, or translocation. Or, at the very least, these inorganic components must have been soaked in tinctures<sup>11</sup> of substances that have been affected by or been part of such magics or natural powers (such as lightning, fire, or decay).

Organic components of an item must have been gathered or harvested in a manner related to a finished item's powers or themselves be of something akin to those powers. A wand whose powers are concerned with the sea, for example, could be fashioned of driftwood or simply of wood cut by a sailor; a wand of lightning could be fashioned from wood cut from a bough that was blasted from its parent tree by a natural lightning strike or by a lightning bolt spell. Failing all else, an organic component can be immersed in the liquid of a completed, operable potion whose magic is concerned with a similar subject or effect as the completed item is intended to exhibit.

Substances bearing a previous dweomer that must be preserved for use in the new item must be treated with *Azundel's purification* spells. All other substances involved in the creation of the magical item—and all liquid components of a tincture or substance bath—must also be treated with this spell or with *Obar's lesser purification*. Priests typically use a *higher consecration* spell to obtain a similar effect.

When the various pieces that will make up an item have been fashioned, they must be strengthened or the item will be no less



Kindroth Larenthanil works on creating a shell for his variant figurine of wondrous power.

fragile than an unenchanted object composed of its various parts. Typically a *Veladar's vambrace* or *holy might* spell is cast on inorganic pieces and a *Nulathoe's ninemen* <sup>12</sup> on organic components. Priests typically perform rituals unique to their church to strengthen organic components.

Up to eight substances can be used in the making of an item, and these can be used in or formed into as many pieces as necessary. The pieces can be attached to each other by the usual straps, bands, bolts, plug-and-socket fits, wire wrappings, encagings, prong/claw or bezel settings, or left separate, as desired, to be held together entirely by magic, but in any case it is customary to make every contact between two different pieces of an item that are to bear an enchantment into an unshakable join by means of a Merald's meld spell. If more than four different substances are to be part of the same item, a crown meld spell should be employed after all of the various lesser melds are cast to weave the melds together into what sages call a harmonic fusion. Additional pieces or later repairs can also be added by the casting of a Merald's meld and a crown meld for each piece to be bound onto the item. (When magical items explode through abuse or circumstance, it is usually because these *melds* call forth the powers of the item into

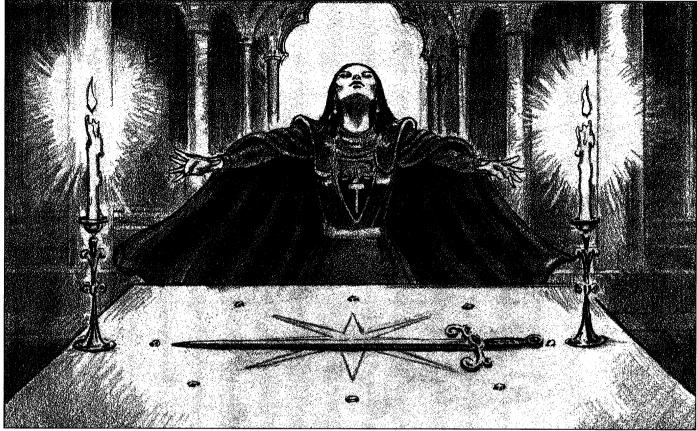
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Trees and woods of Faerûn are detailed in a later section of this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Elminster: Mind ye, certain specific magical items may need to be constructed of yet other woods, such as apple, chestnut, elm, hawthorn, and willow, but these are the kinds most commonly used.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>A tincture is made by storing an ingredient for a tenday or more in a mixture of one-quarter grain alcohol to three-quarters water. The liquid then acquires some of the same mystical vibrations inherent in that which was immersed in it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>This spell is detailed in the *Pages From the Mages* sourcebook.





Nelvanna the True of Tyr begins the enstarment of a special +3 defender long sword.

an explosion as they fail, even though the item's powers may not normally be explosive or violent.)

If the magical item creation process must be interrupted at this point, a *time stop* spell can be cast into any *crown meld* existing on an item in such a way that the item is protected against decay, physical damage, or spell failure until it is next touched by a living creature (or a specific living creature)—which ends the *time stop*. In this manner, completed but not yet empowered items and the *focal stones* holding the powers they are to later be imbued with can wait for years for the crowning steps of the item-making process. Often their creators perish in the interim, and so numerous raw components of incomplete items are stored in tombs, caverns, and other hiding places all over the Realms.

### Enstarment

When the item's shell is judged complete and all of the *focal stones* holding its powers are gathered in the same place as the shell in a setting where rest, drinking water, and freedom from interruptions are all available, the infusion of power into the item can begin. A mage covers an inorganic surface (usually a stone table, casket lid, or floor) with a mystic design enclosing the assembled item shell at its heart and linking it with a circle of its *focal stones*. Each stone must be in a circle, and the shell in a closed outline; each circle must be linked to the shell's outline by

an unbroken line, and an unbroken circle must enclose all of the other markings. A priest repurifies an altartop by washing it with water or other liquid consecrated specially to his or her deity and places the shell in its circle of stones so that all components are within the washed area.

At this point, items that will unleash healing or necromantic powers must be anointed with an ointment (purified with Azundels purification, Obar's lesser purification, higher consecration, or a religion-specific ritual) composed of powdered gems of a type favorable to the magic, pure essential oil, and herbs harvested with a silver weapon or a weapon consecrated to the item creator's deity (if a priest) in particular and obscure conditions, such as under a full moon on Midsummer night, in the shadow of an oak inhabited by a dryad, or from the grave dirt of a vampire in the dark of the moon. The all-important eternal flame spell is then cast, rendering the shell ready to receive enchantments, followed by a wondrous web or holy vesting spell linking the shell with the focal stones. If cast properly, eternal flame makes the shell glow with an eerie deep blue, powerful radiance, and wondrous web or holy vesting creates a humming network of white lines of light encircling each focal stone and linking it with a straight beam of light to the blue radiance surrounding the shell. Priests can also transfer powers from an altar, artifact, or item or directly cast spells into an item as a part of this process by using a ritual of transference spell instead of or in addition to holy vesting.



## Mastering

Time now becomes critical, for this step must be completed before the *wondrous web* or *holy vesting* spell expires. This is the point at which the maker, when in direct, bare-flesh contact with the item shell, enunciates the precise controls to govern the completed item, speaks any words of activation that will be involved, speaks commands the item will obey, and gives the item a name (if applicable). If the mystic design has been prepared to allow for such things, parchments inscribed with words or phrases of activation can be introduced into the *wondrous web* or *holy vesting* in the same way the spells held in the *focal stones* are slowly drawn from them into the item, dissolving the stones, such parchments shrink, shrivel, and disappear as their contents are absorbed into the item. These parchments must either be spell scrolls or bear writings done in magically formulated inks of the same sort that spells are written in.<sup>13</sup>

Errors, omissions, or contradictory commands introduced at this point can leave an item unusable, uncontrollable, or possessing unforeseen side effects or power loopholes. Wizards and priests experienced in the crafting of items can often identify these immediately merely by observing how the item is mastered.

Any magical item or spell crafted so as to operate only when the caster touches it, holds it, or enters its area of activation must by definition involve a truename linked to the caster in its construction and mastering. "Truename" is something of a misnomer; such names are identifiers that must apply correctly to the caster but may be pseudonyms, pet names, or favored titles or phrases. They are usually not innate, unchangeable, unique names that define the caster from birth. "The Sage of Shadowdale," for instance, is a truename for Elminster. If a skilled mage or priest of high rank gains the time and opportunity to study the finished item or spell at leisure and manages to slowly unravel the magic without triggering it, she or he can derive the truename (or truenames) used in its making, and thus can learn of the item or spell's origins and something personal about its creator.

Pulsings in the radiance surrounding the item shell herald the acceptance of the various elements of the mastering; a fading to darkness indicates failure of the entire process. Most often, the *focal stones* and any parchments fade away entirely, the mystic design follows them into oblivion, and the item glows brightly, turns and spins slowly by itself, and then settles into immobility as the glow fades. The item's infusion with magic is then complete.

## Awakening

Finally, the empowered item is awakened by application of an *awakening* spell. This more powerful alternative to the *enchant an item* spell is less likely to end in a failure of the item. If it does cause item failure, however, the empowered shell explodes spectacularly!

## Veiling

Although this stage of enchantment is named for the possible alteration in an item's appearance, the most crucial of its two optional elements is *permanency*. This step can be omitted

entirely if concealment of the true appearance of the item is not desired or the item is not intended to be permanent. A nonpermanent item often requires the use of charges, and if not recharged—or if by its nature not rechargeable—it crumbles to worthless dust when exhausted. Other nonpermanent items fade in efficacy with time or use until they fail entirely, and a few are so enchanted (or misenchanted) as to drain life energy from their wielders or other nearby creatures to power their continued operation. A rare few nonpermanent items are even enspelled so as to destroy themselves in a spectacular manner when their capacities are exhausted.

If a change in an item's appearance is desired, another *eternal flame* spell must be applied immediately before the necessary illusionary or shape-altering magics are applied to the item. Note that a magical item can be altered in size, hue, shape, and apparent composition, but cannot be made to appear alive if it is not composed wholly of organic materials, or vice versa. In other words, a staff made of wood could be made to look like a (lifeless or comatose) human body, but a long sword could not. The true materials of which a magical item is composed are not altered by veiling, only the item's external appearance, including smell, texture, and weight.

An item can be made permanent at any time after first being enchanted, but it assumes its present powers in its permanent state, not its initial ones. If some of the item's abilities have been used up or lost, the permanent item will have only those lesser powers remaining. Again, eternal flame must be cast on the item. With this spell still in operation, permanency is then cast on the item. Priests can achieve permanency by the use of eternal flame followed by a permanency prayer spell. Wizards or priests<sup>14</sup> of vile and evil bent can even avoid the permanent detriment to their Constitutions involved in casting the spell by employing a blood link spell to steal the physical heartiness from another creature. Devout followers of a good or neutral deity may volunteer the sacrifice of their own stalwartness to make an item permanent; it is up to the individual deity to decree whether or not the priest casting the permanency may accept such an offer without jeopardizing his or her alignment or standing in the faith.

If an item has been *awakened* before veiling is attempted, there is no chance that *permanency* will fail. If a change in an already-awakened item's appearance is demanded that is beyond the bounds of what can be done—for example, a wizard trying to turn a wand of illumination into a moving, speaking flesh-and-blood companion—and the veiling therefore fails, the item is not harmed in any way. <sup>15</sup> For these reasons, veiling is usually the last step in the preparation of an item—but either element of a veiling (altering an item's appearance or rendering it permanent) can occur before *awakening* if the item creator so desires.

## The Random Element

Although there is always a chance for magic to go wild or simply to create or exhibit something its wielders did not intend or anticipate, there has always also been a place in the Art for *deliberate* randomness. Accordingly, there is a school of thought in magical

<sup>13</sup> Several scroll inks appear in the *Pages From the Mages* sourcebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Priests of any kind may only use the *blood link* spell if their deity concurs with its use.

<sup>15</sup> Elminster: It bears repeating, so know ye: I have substantially rewritten this chapter and set it into AD&D game terms to ensure that there is no undue danger to the reader. If ye should find one of Volo's original drafts without these sarcastic little footnotes of mine (seeing as all his original complete manuscripts are gone), don't follow the lore he gives for enchanting items, or there'll soon be a shortage of tombstones!



item creation that insists that the most durable items-and almost all of the rare few that surprise their makers with superlative advances in performance beyond what was planned for—are those that include a random ingredient in the making, usually as a tincture in which the item shell is bathed just prior to the casting of the last meld before enstarment on it. Some random ingredients from which tinctures have been made include: the tongue of a griffon that was severed from its body with a blade of whipgrass soon after the griffon's death of natural causes, a cluster of dragonslumber berries cut with a silver-bladed sickle by the light of a full moon, the caps of three faerieglow mushrooms that sprouted from ground that was struck by lightning, six tears from a sprite weeping from happiness, one eye from a silverfin fish caught with a silver hook, and three acorns scorched by spellfire. This mystery ingredient is considered part of the crazed search for a universal material component<sup>16</sup> by those who do not subscribe to its inclusion in the making of items, but adherents to the practice of its inclusion regard it as a offering to Mystra that is essential to the success of all items-and its inclusion, in their opinion, is occasionally rewarded by the goddess of magic through the infusion into an item of an unexpected extra power or property.

# Wizard Item: Andratha's Wand of Battle

To illustrate the long process of making an item, let us watch the sorceress Andratha, emboldened by her mastery (in practice, at least) of the spells abeyance and focal stone, prepare a wand of battle. She envisions a simple wooden wand that has no command words, but rather is under the silent mental control of its wielder, who must be a wizard and is to be mentally informed of the wand's powers upon touching it. The wand is to be permanent rather than having charges and is to have three powers: the ability to fire a gout of flame once per round, <sup>17</sup> the power to emit a trio of magic missiles once per round, and the power to send a surge of healing life energy into the wielder once per round. The wand will only be able to unleash one of these powers per round.

After much study and experimentation, Andratha creates a spell, *gout of flame*, that shoots forth a beam of flames from her hand reaching up to 10 feet away; it deals 2d4+2 points of damage and forces saving throws vs. magical fire on flammable items it comes into contact with. It is a 2nd level spell, and rather than risk ruining her future magical item by trying to tinker with her *gout of flame* with some sort of augmentation magic, Andratha spends the better part of a season modifying and improving on the spell until she gets a 3rd-level spell, *improved gout of flame*, that sends a beam of tightly focused flame up to 40 feet away, deals 4d6 points of damage, and has with the same effects on flammable items as *gout of flame*. She makes several *improved gout of flame* scrolls for safekeeping and turns to the second desired power.

*Magic missile* is a simple enough spell and limiting her normal casting of it down to three of the magical bolts by altering her incan-

tation is easy, but she suspects that directing the missiles at up to three separate targets through her mental control over the wand is going to be tricky. Faced with possibly a year or more of research on this point, Andratha abandons it and turns to altering one of her more powerful spells, the Simbul's synostodweomer (the only means she knows for converting spell energy into healing magic) into a variant form that can be used in the wand. The only way she can see of doing this is to power the healing effect directly from the magic missile ability, gaining her a flood of 3d4+3 points' worth of energy. The wand could then heal this much damage in a round, but any excess healing gained over and above the wand wielder's normal maximum hit points would simply be lost, probably leaking out as a visible nimbus of radiance to avoid a possible backlash effect that might destroy the wand. Work on researching the spell to convert the energy of a memorized magic missile spell to healing energy takes her the better part of a year, and it is with mingled triumph and wry amusement that she dubs her variant 7th-level spell Andratha's little victory.

With her preliminary researches done, Andratha sets out to get some stones to enspell into *focal stones*. Deciding she needs to acquire them personally to be sure that they are pure, properly cut gemstones, <sup>18</sup> she hires some adventurers in a distant city to escort her to the best dwarven gem mines she knows of. When there, she pays a steep price for all she needs (and a few extra) of what she believes to be the right gems, according to writings on *focal stones* she gained long ago when she was an adventuress. To avoid possible treachery, she pays off the adventurers and *teleports* herself and the gems back to her tower.<sup>19</sup>

Back in her tower, Andratha casts *focal stone* spells on the gems and via *dweomerflow* spells pours her *improved gout of flame* into one, her damped-down *magic missile* triad into another, and *Andratha's little victory* into a third, slapping an *abeyance* spell on each stone as her spell goes in. Charging each stone takes her several days of spell study, work, and rest. Once the *focal stones are* safely hidden inside a hollow statuette out behind her privy, <sup>20</sup> she turns her attention to how to construct the wand itself, suspecting—rightly—that her real work is just beginning.

Andratha wants a wand that is resistant to flame, and yet it must be associated in some way with flame. After some research, including a long journey in disguise to consult a expensive sage, Andratha concludes that she needs to find some duskwood trees that have survived a forest fire and sever a bough from one of them with a silver-bladed axe after dousing the selected branch with potions of healing and raking it with three magic missile spells. Relieved that she is not going to have to stand in the full flare of a red dragon's breath weapon or hire someone to heal her while someone else thrusts a stake that the wand will later be carved from into her and someone else hurls magic missiles her way, Andratha begins scrying and querying.

She soon locates her trees, loads up on *magic missile* spells and the necessary items, and harvests her wood. Taking the bough to a caravan town, she hires a woodcarver to cut and whittle a dozen or so "spokes for a broken carriage wheel" from it and ignores the knowing smile he gives her.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Discussed elsewhere in this chapter in its own section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Volo: Very few mages have mastered the extremely difficult art of making an offensive item that can do two things in a round—and only the Magister, the Chosen of Mystra, and other semidivine beings have ever managed to craft an item that can launch the same attack twice in the same round. (Elminster confirms this and has translated Volo's vague time and damage notations into AD&D game terms for our easier comprehension.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Volo: Note the typical wizardly paranoia.

<sup>19</sup> Volo: And again!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Volo: As I was saying, wizards tend to be a mite suspicious of the world around—and not always without reason.





Andratha prepares for the enstarment of her wand of battle.

Taking her "spokes" home, she whittles one to a rough wand shape herself, and casts *Azundel's purification* twice on it to render it into a fine, slender, regular wand in the finest possible condition. Then she bathes it in a *potion of healing* and casts *Nulathoe's ninemen* on it to make it durable.

Andratha decides to make her wand usable by herself alone. Laboriously she carves her personal sigil into its butt and then melts down several silver pieces in a crucible. Pouring the molten silver out on a rock, she casts *Obar's lesser purification* on the puddle, and then breathes on it, casts *gout of flame* on it and a *magic missile* into it. She picks up the silver with a pair of purified tongs and places it into a smaller purified crucible with a ladle lip where she reheats it until the silver is once more molten. Finally, she pours the molten silver into the grooves of the sigil, leaving her with a wand emblazoned with her own silver sigil.

As the metal cools, she casts a *Merald's meld* on the wand to fuse it and the silver sigil together. Then she gets her deepest, best-hidden storage cellar ready with a cot, chamber pot, several drinking jugs, candles, some food, a marble-topped table, some *potions of healing*, and her spellbooks, retrieves the hidden *focal stones*, and barricades herself away in the cellar behind a conjured *wall of stone* to make her wand at last.

She places the *focal stones* and the wand on the table, draws a mystic design carefully linking them, and anoints the wand with an ointment made of powdered amethyst, essential rose oil, and healmint harvested with a silver knife on Greengrass next to a pool blessed by a unicorn's horn. She then casts an *eternal flame* 

spell on the stick of wood. Following it with the *wondrous web* spell, Andratha quickly touches the sigil on the wand and whispers her nickname in youth, "Dappleback," a cruel taunt bestowed on her by other children in the village where she grew up because of several large moles on her back. It is a name she doubts anyone but herself remembers, but identifies her alone.

After announcing that only she is to be able to call forth its powers, Andratha carefully (following out a written-out script she prepared earlier) outlines what those powers will be, not forgetting to stipulate that she will be able to bestow the healing flow of energy on another being by touching them with the wand and willing it so. As she completes her reading, Andratha recalls that she forgot to work out how the *magic missiles* could be directed to separate targets—so they will have to all be hurled at the same being.

As the deep blue glow of the wand shell and the web of white radiances connecting it and each of the stones pulse and flicker, Andratha can from the pulsing that the wand has taken the powers from the *focal stones*. Andratha checks that her *potions of healing* are within reach, whispers a prayer to Mystra that she find success and not need any healing, and casts an *awakening* spell. The wand flashes with light, almost blinding her, but does not explode. Exhausted, Andratha feels for it, grasps it, and stumbles to her cot. Slipping the wand inside her girdle, she sleeps with it next to her.

Andratha sleeps for a long time. When she awakens, she takes out the wand, holds it up, and is relieved to find that it communi-



cates its ready powers to her. She casts *permanency* on it—and collapses onto her cot again. This time when she awakens, weak and ravenously hungry, Andratha takes up the wand to test its powers and finds that they all work, but that only the healing function is permanent, and it will work but three times a day. The *improved gout of fire* and *magic missile* powers are going to need recharging. Andratha sighs and then shrugs. She knows of no way around that necessity but at least she has a wand.

She raises it proudly as she uses her last memorized spell to blast away her defensive *wall* of *stone*. The *Andratha wand of battle* is simple and straightforward—and it only took a few years to make. Next time she feels the need for a wand, Andratha vows, she will go and *buy* one—or find a large, alert mage-killing red dragon who has a few in its hoard and slay it. It will be easier.

# Wizard Item Enchantment Spells

Here are the major item creation spells mentioned in the text or involved in the processes described. Many wizards have developed alternatives to these spells.

#### 4th Level

**Dweomerflow** (Wiz 4; Alteration) Range: 20 yards or touch

Components: V,S
Duration: 1 round
Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: One person or one item

Saving Throw: Special

This spell can be cast in one of two fashions. In the first version, <code>dweomerflow</code> is cast on a spellcaster by another being or by the spellcaster himself or herself. The spell causes the next spell the recipient spellcaster casts to be unaffected in casting and particulars but to <code>flow</code> from the caster into a prepared receptacle instead of taking its usual effect. No saving throws are required or permitted by the spellcaster or the receptacle. Appropriate receptacles include a <code>focal stone</code>, a <code>crystal ball</code>, or another item that can hold magics within itself, such as a magical item in need of recharging, crucibles temporarily empowered by spells to accept enchantments, artifacts, and the like. If the item is destroyed or later affected by spells that force it to disgorge stored magics, the "flowed" spell is released then.

• Dweomerflow creates a resonating field between the recipient spellcaster and the item to be infused with a spell. If the item is not present or not within range when the spell takes effect, the dweomerflow creates a ghostly swirling radiance which fades if an alternative item cannot be found or brought within range within the single round of the spell's duration, and the spell is wasted.

The second version of *dweomerflow* allows the spellcaster to transfer charges or stored spells from item to item, such as a charge from one *wand of lightning* to another or a spell from one ring of spell storing to another. When this version of *dweomerflow* is cast, a saving throw vs. spell must be made by both items involved. If the sending item fails its saving throw, the *dweomerflow* spell is ruined, but no charges or stored spells are lost. If the receiving spell fails its saving throw, the charge or spell being transferred is lost—sometimes with spectacular effects—along with the dweomerflow. In this version of the spell, the spellcaster

must be touching both items involved to provide a "bridge" for the spell energy involved.

Merald's Meld (Wiz 4; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: Two nonliving objects

Saving Throw: None

This spell is used to bind two objects together without any physical attachments. The caster must touch both items to be linked and move them into conjunction with each other into the desired join position; the magic then forms a permanent join. Organic objects can be melded, but living or undead material cannot.

The two items need not be materials that would normally adhere to each other and need not fit to form a large meeting surface; Meralds meld fuses them into a join that is unbreakable under normal circumstances. The two melded items are not actually altered in any way, which is why a particular item can be involved in an infinite number of melds.

A Merald's meld can be broken, separating the fused items without harming them in any way, by application of four dispel magic spells specifically to the join or joins unless a crown meld was later applied to the linked items. If a crown meld has been applied, all of the melds are impervious to any number of dispel magics as if the entire item were made without magical joinery.

If an item containing melds fails an item saving throw, the most common result is that one of the melds fails, separating the joined pieces, rather than the materials of the item being shattered, burned, or otherwise affected. Again, the joins do not separate in this way if a crown meld has been applied.

The material components of this spell are a flake or drop of resin, an iron filing or sliver, a strand of spider silk, and a paste made of ground legumes.

Obar's Lesser Purification (Wiz 4; Abjuration)

Range: 3 yards Components: V, S, M Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: One item or a volume of liquid or raw materials

no greater than the caster's body volume

Saving Throw: None

This spell destroys any curses, magical tracers linked to other spells or magics, and remnants of previous magics from a single nonliving item (which may be composed of any number of materials) or a single body of liquid (in puddle form or filling a container). The spell causes its target material to glow to indicate the presence of active or not-yet-unleashed magics in the item or substances the spell is applied to, but it does not trigger, alter, or identify such dweomers. Obar's lesser purification affects dry or powdered materials of the same volume as a liquid if they are gathered into a heap or continuous volume (for example, filling a cup or coffer), but does not affect recently living materials, such as the bodies of beings who have been dead for less than a month or who are now undead. Obar's lesser purification also serves to purge liquids—such as those used in the making of potions or magic-related unguents, baths, or tinctures—of impurities, either



natural or magical in origin. It performs this secondary function simultaneously with its major dweomer-related purging.

The material components are a pinch of limestone dust, a pinch of salt, and three drops from a potion of sweet water.

#### 5th Level

Abeyance (Wiz 5; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: 1 focal stone or 1 magical item

Saving Throw: None

This spell may be cast in one of two forms. In the most commonly used form, this magic freezes another spell that has earlier been cast into a *focal stone* so that it will delay its execution indefinitely, not taking effect for years, if need be, until released by a *dweomerflow, wondrous web* or *holy vesting* spell; by the shattering of the *focal stone*; or by certain other spells that can extract magics from within such a magical prison, (It should be noted that *dispel magic* is not one of these.) The *abeyance* is broken by any such contact, freeing the spell to take instant effect, but if the contact is with a *dweomerflow, wondrous web,* or *holy vesting* spell, the *abeyance* fades but the stored magic is not released, being conveyed instead to another magical receptacle.

The second way that *abeyance* can be used affects only magical items (not artifacts). If the caster of the *abeyance* manages to directly touch a magical item with his or her bare flesh as this spell is cast, the next time the magical item is activated, its effect is delayed from taking effect for 1 round, and the *abeyance* dissipates thereafter.

Eternal Flame (Wiz 5; Alteration, Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: One item or body not exceeding twice the

caster's own body volume in size

Saving Throw: None

The name of this spell comes from a poetic name for magic attributed originally to the elves. *Eternal flame* can be cast to affect an item or a body. If this spell is cast on an object or body that has a volume more than twice that of the caster, it fails and is wasted.

Transmitted only by direct touch, this spell imbues an item with a receptive neutral enchantment that causes it to readily accept later magics cast or transferred (by dweomerflow spells, for example) into it. In other words, eternal flame allows magic to be fed into an item simply by casting spells in the normal way and choosing the item as the target, but then willing the spell to enter and not harm the item. (In other words, it makes a dweomerflow spell unnecessary unless a spell is being transferred from another item such as a focal stone.) One spell or magical effect per level of the caster of the eternal flame can enter the affected item without a saving throw being needed for the item, any chance of the transfer failing, or any damage occurring to spell or item. There is no time limit to this entry of powers, but the opportunity to imbue them is ended by the casting of an awakening spell on the item.

Note that unlike the *enchant an item* spell, *eternal flame* merely allows an item to hold enchantments within itself—it does *not* 

enchant the item so as to allow it to emit enchantments flowed into it as controllable powers. In other words, an item affected by an *eternal flame* spell bears a dweomer and may hold magics within it, but it is *not* a usable magical item until the magics to give it powers have been conveyed into it and an *awakening* spell successfully cast upon it. (In other words, this spell handles only the very beginnings of the process that the *enchant an item* spell encompasses.) Unless or until power transfer occurs and an *awakening* spell is cast, the item is an item storing magic that no one can call upon in any controlled way—though if the item itself is shattered, the magics within it will usually find instant and explosive release

This spell can also be cast on living, dead, or undead mammalian bodies by touch. It completely attunes body tissues to fully receive a spell. The next spell to come into contact with a body prepared by an *eternal flame* spell takes full effect, exhibiting maximum possible duration, beneficial effect, damage, or whatever—even if a saving throw is normally necessary for the body to be affected at all—and does not require the affected being to make any saving throw, system shock survival roll, or resurrection survival roll, even if one is normally imperative. (Note that a clerical turning or dispelling attempt is not a spell.) Two schools of wizardry spells are exceptions to this: enchantment/charm and illusion/phantasm. An *eternal flame* does not cause the effectiveness of enchantment/charm or illusion/phantasm spells to be changed for the affected body at all.

The material component of an *eternal flame* spell is a spark struck by the impact of an item bearing a dweomer from a rock, bladed weapon, or metal item that bears some sort of dweomer. (Neither item is harmed in any way by the spell.)

Focal Stone (Wiz 5; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 clear or translucent gemstone of crystalline

structure no larger in size than the caster's

balled fist

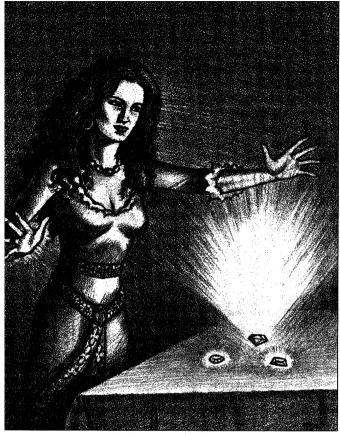
Saving Throw: Special

This spell transforms the internal structure of a clear or translucent gemstone of crystalline structure no larger in size than the caster's balled fist to enable it to receive and hold a spell dweomer (usually cast into it by use of a *dweomerflow* spell). At the time the spell is cast, roll an item saving throw for the gemstone vs. magical fire (rock, crystal vs. magical fire). Success means that the spell is successful; failure destroys the gemstone. Gemstones of above-normal quality may receive a bonus to the saving throw at the DM's discretion (usually from +1 to up to +3 for flawless or otherwise extremely exceptional quality stones).

The gemstone glows with a soft internal radiance once *focal stone* is cast (which in some markets raises its value), and it emits a faint dweomer. If immersed in a poisonous liquid, the *focal stone* turns a vivid purple and can be commanded by touch and will to *neutralize poison*. If so commanded, the *focal stone* dissolves and is destroyed, but it leaves the liquid safe to drink or touch.

A *focal stone* otherwise has no special properties; contrary to popular belief, it cannot reach out and trap spells cast near it or suck in passing enchanted creatures, though it is an ideal recepta-





Andratha casts focal stone.

cle for the life force of a being using a *magic jar* spell. The *focal stone* spell does not prevent the *focal stone* from being shattered by deliberate attack (a crushing blow, for instance), but does prevent it from being damaged by natural and magical heat, flame, lava, extreme cold, or mineral contamination. Shattering a *focal stone* immediately unleashes the full effects of any spell stored in it in a manner determined by the DM. A *dispel magic* cast on such a stone does not affect it or any stored magics.

The material component is a pinch of any sort of opal dust.

#### Veladar's Vambrace (Wiz 5; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: One item no larger in volume than the caster's

body volume

Saving Throw: None

This spell serves to strengthen inorganic substances so they do not rot or age. The caster touches one item, which may be crafted of any number of inorganic substances joined together but must not be larger in total volume than the caster's body, and the *vambrace* takes effect. Organic substances, such as glues, can be present in the object, but if they make up more than a tenth of its total volume, the spell fails. Any fractures or weaknesses existing in the item are purged, so that it is whole, looks like new and is free of blemishes. In addition, fragile substances are hardened, and hard

substances made more resilient; an item treated with *Veladar's vambrace* gains a bonus of +5 on all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, disintegration, fall, normal fire, and cold.

The material components of this spell are a whole diamond of not less than 2,000 gp value, a sliver or chunk of ironwood of the same size or larger than the diamond, a piece of chitin of about the same size from a beholder, ankheg, or bulette, and a drop of giant slug spittle.

#### 6th Level

Crown Meld (Wiz 6; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: None

This spell is used by mages to securely bind together either the melded pieces of an item that will later be made into a magical item or—more rarely—to securely bind a fragile item (a repaired boat, for example) upon whose wholeness lives will depend. A *crown meld* is necessary whenever more than four different substances are used in the making of a magical item or whenever four or more *Merald's meld* spells are used in the construction of such an item.

A *crown meld* links multiple preexisting melds together into a resilient whole, fusing disparate pieces into a single item so that they are one whole, unflawed, continuous piece. If the item is later subjected to stress—for instance, placed in a situation where it must make a saving throw—the item makes a single saving throw and is considered, for the purposes of the result, to be made entirely of whichever of its component substances gets the most favorable saving throw. For instance, a ceremonial scepter made of wood topped with a glass figurine *crown melded* to it would save as thin wood against a fall, but as glass against fire.

The material components of this spell are a lump of resin as large as the caster's thumb, an iron nail, a strand of spider silk, a handful of paste made of ground legumes, and a flawless diamond of any size and at least 2,000 gp value.

#### Wondrous Web (Wiz 6; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is used to imbue readied items with magical powers. The caster touches first the destination item and then any other items that hold magic that is to be drained into the destination item. The items to be drained may be potions, spell scrolls, parchments with magical command words or inscriptions, *focal stones*, or existing magical items.

A wondrous web forms a humming network of glowing, white, visible lines of magical force as the caster touches the various items to be involved. These remain visible until the spell ends, whereupon they fade. One power or control property is transferred per round to the destination item. The absorption of powers can often be seen by observers due to the sequential disappearance of focal stones, spell scrolls, and the like. Powers



and magical controls drained by a *wondrous web* are transferred intact to the destination item and there combined harmoniously, being held within the item in stable magical stasis until the item is awakened by use of an *awakening* spell. (Control conditions are attached to the magics they are intended for, powers that are to work in sequence are arranged that way, and so on.)

Only existing magical items are allowed a saving throw against this spell. Any item having less than three effects or functions has a base saving throw of 7; any item with four or more effects or functions has a base saving throw of 9 and adds one point per function beyond four. If the item successfully saves against the effect of wondrous web, it is unaffected. If it fails, the wondrous web draws a random function out of it. If any of its effects or functions drain charges to function, they are affected first, and 1d4 charges are transferred per round, not the ability to perform the function. For items lacking charges, the ability to perform the effect is permanently taken from the item, possibly destroying it or rendering it nonmagical. The wondrous web spell provides no mitigation or protection against any explosive effects that might be built in to the destruction of an item.

Wondrous web can be ended prematurely if the caster so wills. Whichever magic is in transit (if any remain untransferred) when the spell is ended is ruined and lost, but those that have already entered the destination item are unaffected, as are the powers or properties not yet taken from their original holding places. A dispel magic also disrupts a wondrous web spell, but other magical attacks (short of a properly worded limited wish or wish spell) do not affect it. Missiles or thrown weapons that strike a wondrous web are teleported a 1d6x10 feet away in a random direction but are otherwise unharmed.

The material components are six strands of spider silk and a piece of fishing net or lace.

#### 7th Level

Awakening (Wiz 7; Enchantment, Invocation)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 2 rounds
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is used to activate a touched magical item bearing multiple enchantments or exhibiting multiple functions. It is an alternative to the better-known *enchant an item* spell, but accomplishes less. To create a magical item with an *awakening* spell, several other spells must be used first, including *eternal flame* and usually *wondrous web* or *holy vesting* and various *dweomerflow* castings. *Awakening* can be used on a magical item that has been created with an *enchant an item* spell if additional powers are added to the item after its initial creation and enough use of the item has occurred to call upon all of the original powers at least once.

When the spell is cast, the item must make a saving throw to determine if the *awakening* has been successful. The item's base saving throw is the same as the caster's saving throw vs. spell, modified as follows: a -1 penalty per being other than the spell-caster who cast spells on the item during preparation or contributed magics that were put into the item before the *awakening* attempt, a +1 bonus per *meld* and *crown meld* spell existing on the item, and a +1 bonus if *both* an *eternal flame* and a *Veladar's* 

vambrace, Nulathoe's ninemen, or holy might spell were cast on the item before the awakening attempt. These bonuses are cumulative, but a roll of 1 is always a failure.

The failure of an *awakening* attempt means either the item crumbles to worthless dust or explodes violently. Roll 1d6; a result of 1 or 2 means an explosion occurs similar to a *fireball* centered on the item that deals 1d6 points of damage per level of the *awakening* caster and in addition destroys the item utterly. A roll of 4-6 means that the item collapses into dust. A wind will rise from nowhere to carry this dust away, and even if some dust is somehow retained, it is magically inert and worthless.

Success of the *awakening* attempt means the item is *awakened* instantly into operation. It functions perfectly, though if the creator has been careless or inattentive in his or her preparations, the item's performance may involve some surprises. A successful *awakening* may be heralded by a flash of light from the item, but this effect is never a harmful discharge of wild magic or item powers.

The material components for this spell are a single wizard spell scroll bearing at least as many spells as the item has functions, a gem of any sort of not less than 2,500 gp value each for each item function, and a living plant that has been altered by magic. Some sages believe an *awakening* is more likely to succeed (an additional +1 bonus to the item's saving throw at the DM's discretion) if a random dweomer-bearing component is also present in the spell-casting components.

#### Azundel's Purification (Wiz 7; Abjuration)

Range: 3 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: One item or a volume of liquid or raw materials

no greater than the caster's body volume

Saving Throw: None

Similar to *Obar's lesser purification*, this more potent spell destroys any curses, magical tracers linked to other spells or magics, and remnants of previous magics from a single nonliving item (which may be composed of any number of materials) or a single body of liquid (in puddle form or filling a container). In addition, *Azundel's purification* expunges any existing wizard spells or special spell-like abilities imposed by a wizard on an item *without setting them off*. Note that such magics are not identified, but simply obliterated. The spell causes its target material to glow to indicate the presence of active or not-yet-unleashed priest spells or priest-imposed spell-like abilities in the item or substances the spell is applied to that are not removed by this spell. It does not trigger, alter, or identify such dweomers, nor does it destroy or remove them.

Azundel's purification affects dry or powdered materials of the same volume as a liquid if they are gathered into a heap or continuous volume (for example, filling a cup or coffer), but does not affect recently living materials, such as the bodies of beings who have been dead for less than a month or who are now undead. Azundel's purification also serves to purge liquids—such as those used in the making of potions or magic-related unguents, baths, or tinctures—of impurities, either natural or magical in origin. It performs this secondary function simultaneously with its major dweomer-related purging.

If this spell is cast twice on the same item or material, regardless of how much time elapses between the castings, all component



parts of the item are rendered as fine as possible. All internal and visible imperfections are removed, and the craftsmanship of the material's shaping and adornment, plus the nature of the material itself is raised to the finest possible state. A crude cudgel or a toy sword, for example, could be transformed into exceptional show-pieces by this spell, items fine enough to take the most powerful and complex magical enchantments.

The material components of this spell are a pinch of dust from a powdered *focal stone*, a flawless diamond of any size or value, and at least three drops of a *potion of sweet water*.

#### Blood Link (Wiz 7; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 sentient creature

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell can only be used in conjunction with a permanency wizard spell or a permanency prayer priest spell. It must be cast within 1 turn preceding either of these spells to have any effect at all

A *blood link* enables a caster to drain another sentient creature of the 1-point Constitution loss involved in casting a *permanency*-related magic. Unwitting or unwilling target creatures gain a saving throw to break a *blood link*, avoiding this loss. The caster must touch this target creature. If the creature is able to move, hostile, or suspicious, a successful attack roll is required.

Note that use of this spell is not a good act; good- and neutralaligned casters imperil their moral standing unless there are divine commands or other circumstances mitigating the spell's use (such as a willing worshiper of the same faith or a loved one desiring to make the sacrifice for the spellcaster). The DM must adjudicate such situations.

The material components of this spell are a short length of chain carved from zalantar wood, three walnut shell halves, and a drop of blood.

#### 8th Level

Dweomer Divination (Wiz 8; Divination)

Range: Touch Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3 rounds
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: None

This spell reveals things about a touched item in an unfolding process that continues until all information about the item has been gained or the spell duration expires. If the same caster employs another *dweomer divination* on an item already examined by him or her by use of this spell, the magic skips over information the caster has already gained to reveal new information.

In the first round of a *dweomer divination*, all dweomers present on the item or linked to it are revealed; on the second round, any alignment or class restrictions or special benefits associated with the item are identified; in the third round, the primary function or most powerful dweomer on the item is fully revealed—in other words, how it works—to the *dweomer divination* caster; during the fourth round any word of activation or command process

associated with that primary power is revealed; and on the fifth round, anything wrong with, or missing from, the functioning of that power is clearly and fully identified. These successive rounds of inquiry occur even if there are no words or magical problems associated with the power, and at the end of each round, the caster is made positively aware of such absences.

On subsequent rounds, this process is repeated for any additional item powers or properties after the primary or most powerful one in descending order of intensity of their dweomer or importance of their effect until all item powers have been explored. (In other words, the cycle of rounds three through five repeats as necessary.) The spell then turns to revealing any additional control words or operating restrictions on the item for a round (such as special purposes or personal linkages), recharging methods or the confirmed absence of same on the next round, and some images of how the item was made on subsequent rounds.

Note that all information gained after the first round occurs only for items that have been enchanted, not normal tools, furniture, or garments. Upon normal items *dweomer divination* essentially performs as a very sophisticated, but ultimately little more informative, *detect magic*.

A dweomer divination ends immediately if the caster neglects to touch or handle the item for an entire round or if the item is found to bear no dweomer. Note that a powerful spell that touches an item—a fireball blast that flings a weapon down a hall, for example—leaves a trace dweomer on the item for 1 day per level of the spell, so that nonenchanted items can still bear trace dweomers. Magics meant to be permanent or long-lasting and spells that wait quiescent indefinitely for specific trigger conditions to occur leave dweomers of much longer duration—months or years per spell level—on items in contact with them. The spell reveals the approximate nature of such associate dweomers, but not what their precise damage, extent, or trigger conditions were or are.

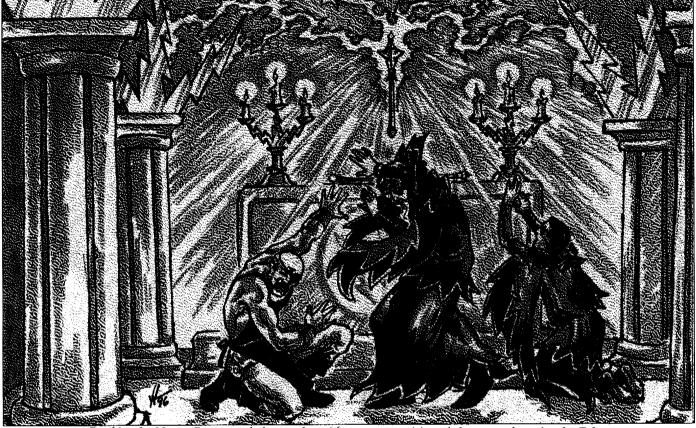
Note that a *dweomer divination* provides no protection against curses or magical traps placed on items other than to identify them in its unfolding process, and it does not delay or prevent such traps' or curses' normal functioning in any way. *Dweomer divination* may well also not reveal side effects of using an item that its enchanter did not intend or foresee.

## Priest Item: Mace of Reaving

Not far away from Andratha's tower is a small, hidden temple of Talos where devout followers of the evil Lord of Storms and Destruction run a hostel for brigands on the run and dedicate themselves to organizing destructive raids on outlying hamlets, small caravans, and undefended herds of cattle (to gain themselves food). Darthin, doorwarden of the temple, is sorely wounded while fighting off a vengeful band of mercenaries hired by a merchant who escaped temple-sponsored brigands and did not forgive nor forget the loss of six wagons of trade goods. While recovering, the doorwarden muses on what sort of surprising magic he might wield to defend the temple doors more or less alone—and find victory.

Out of his dreams swims a vivid vision, night after night, of himself standing at the open temple door on a clear summer night with lightning cleaving the starry sky along the distant horizon,





Darthin, the Master Reaver, and the temple smith are sent a vision of the mace of reaving by Talos.

while angry priests of Lathander lead forces to assault the temple. Darthin raises the mace in his hand—and it spouts fire to strike down one attacker. He swings it again, at empty air, and magical bolts—like a wizard's *magic missiles*—burst forth from it to smite another Lathanderian. And then, as the servants of the Morninglord all shout and charge, smashing at his body with their own hammers and maces, Darthin feels healing power flooding through him from the mace and keeps his feet, hurling these foes back from the sacred threshold.

He awakes shouting in exultation. After the same vision comes for the third night, Darthin informs his superiors. The Master Reaver, head of the temple, sleeps in the same room the next night with his sacred storm staff laid across both men to link their sleeping bodies from cot to cot. In his dreams, the Master shares Darthin's vision. In the morning, the Master tells Darthin that he is released from all other duties until he has created the mace seen in the vision—and that he has a free hand with temple resources and to command his fellow priests to accomplish this making.

Immediately Darthin goes to the temple smith and tells him to fashion a mace from the last precious adamant ore struck by the divine lightning of Talos in the Stormcall ritual of last Midsummer night. "For the glory of Talos, let it be the best mace you have ever made," Darthin says, and after hearing the tale of the vision, the

wonder-struck smith agrees. The doorwarden then withdraws into the darkest temple cellar to fast and pray to Talos for guidance, seeking visions to direct him as to how to make the mace.

He sees himself slaying a wizard barehanded, calling on the name of Talos as he strangles the man and endures the pain of a frantic barrage of *magic missiles* from the wand the wizard wields and has thrust desperately into Darthin's ribs—the wand Darthin staggers away with after the man is dead.<sup>21</sup> Darthin takes careful mark of the wizard's face in the vision.

The next vision he sees is of his own face lit by flickering flames rising from his own hands in the very cellar he is sitting in. Obviously, Talos wants Darthin to craft the mace's fire magic himself. Modifying a *flame blade* spell should make a good beginning.

The last vision takes almost a tenday to come. It is of himself on his knees, holding the mace, which has been anointed with a glistening ointment. All of the senior priests of the temple, dressed in full ceremonial robes, hold forth their hands in unison to cast healing spells on him— and the ointment boils away from the mace like smoke roiling away from a fire.

Darthin tells the Master Reaver of what he has seen, omitting no detail, and they discuss what must be done. The Master agrees to devote time to improving the rituals of purification and consecration of items to Talos and to set the senior priests to the task of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Elminster: This act is, of course, afoul piece of depravity and murder. Only an evil, twisted swine such as a priest of Talos would find the very thought of doing such a thing possible. Not to mention the retribution the mage's friends are going to wreak upon the fellow and his church once they discover whose hand this misdeed was performed by. . . .





Darthin dedicates the mace of reaving to Talos's service.

modifying the known process of creating a *staff of curing* to imbue an item with the ability to *cure serious wounds*.

Armed with good walking shoes, as much small coin as the temple can spare, and a variety of garments intended to make disguises possible, Darthin sets out to find the wizard in his vision. It takes him over a year, keeping to port cities having the crowded alleyway settings he saw in his vision of the battle, to find the man, and a few months more to corner him alone to perform his dastardly assault. But when their struggle occurs, it happens just as in Darthin's vision. More dead than alive, Darthin seizes the hard-won wand and staggers away, calling on Talos to see him safely home.

The god obliges, and after a long, painful journey, Darthin returns to the temple in triumph to find that the Master Reaver is similarly jubilant over the capture of a priest of Gond. Negotiations between the Talassans and the Gondar to regain their brother have ended in the release of the Gondar priest and the delivery to the Talassan temple of a scroll containing the clerical prayer version of the wizardly spell *dweomer divination*, which will allow the priests to examine the magical workings of the wand.

Darthin finds that the mace itself was completed long ago and has been taken to hired mages to have *magic missiles* cast at it several times, as well as being touched by priests unleashing healing spells and shrouded in the flames of fiery spells at the high altar of the temple. The mace and the wand are placed together on the

altar, and Darthin, the temple smith, and the Master Reaver begin a vigil around it—a vigil that lasts for a day and a night before the exhausted men fall asleep.

They soon wake, as Talos sends lightning snapping out of the mace to strike the hammered steel lightning bolts that adorn the four corner pillars of the holy sanctuary and rebound again. The men wake to discover that they have shared the same visions: First and last comes a scene of the mace floating amid lightnings, drifting slowly nearer as the echoing voice of Talos intones: "Let this mace of reaving be wielded always in true service to me. Take care that it serve no other." Between those identical visions come scenes of the anointing of the mace and its dedication to Talos at the altar; then the weapon flashing with lightning strikes as it stands, planted head uppermost in the ground, on a stormswept hilltop; Darthin kneeling as the assembled senior clergy cast healing magic into the (differently) anointed mace; and then the ritual of transference, at which all the priests and novices of the temple are gathered around the altar while arcs of magical energy crackle between the mace and the captured wand and both float above the altar. The three holy men of Talos agree to follow the procedures they have seen without delay and set about it.22

First, holy water is newly consecrated to Talos, and taken forth in blessed jugs to be touched by lightning during a storm on a nearby hilltop where the priests have set up a tall metal pole in the shape of a lightning bolt. *Focal stone* spells are cast on some of the temple's store of gems, and Darthin sets to work modifying a *flame blade* prayer to produce a firebolt spell, ending up with a 4th-level spell that could probably have been more quickly derived from a *produce fire* prayer, and creates a jet of flame that can leap out up to 40 feet (length controlled by the caster), that forces item saving throws vs. magical fire on all flammable substances it touches, and that deals 2d4+8 points of damage.

While Darthin is repeatedly revising and testing his firebolt prayer to Talos in seclusion in the cellar, a well-armed delegation from the temple has taken a *focal stone* to a wizard and hired him to cast *magic missile* into it. They pay him handsomely in temple gold and provide for him a copy of the *dweomerflow* spell used in the transference.

The *firebolt* and *cure serious wounds* spells find their ways into *focal stones* by the same process, and then all three stones are placed, with the mace, in the specially prepared holy water, in a deep bowl sacred to the Destroyer. A prayer is offered to Talos, an eternal flame spell is cast on the mace, and the priests chant the most holy Stormcall ritual. Lightning bursts forth from the holy water, the mace rises to levitate above the altar, and the water and the *focal stones* are consumed.

The jubilant Master Reaver dedicates the floating mace to Talos and is struck senseless when he touches it. Darthin hesitantly reaches out for the floating weapon and finds no harm come to him as he takes it from its floating position and leads the assembled priests in a procession out to the hilltop. There the mace is planted upright, as shown in the vision, within a ring of guardian priests. A storm begins over the hilltop before the group led by Darthin even reaches the temple again, and lightnings begin to stab at the mace in a furious display that sends the guardians fleeing to the base of the hill to watch in exalted wonder.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Note how difficult it is for a priest to create any magical item on the sly or to make anything at all bearing a permanent enchantment that is not expressly dedicated to the service of the faith. An old saying claims that "Potions know no master," but it seems that more complex items made by priests do. Note also how both Darthin the Doorwarden and the sorceress Andratha earn the experience they'll gain for making these items.



When the storm passes, Darthin takes the mace to his cot and falls asleep clutching it to his breast. The visions he had earlier, both of guarding the temple threshold and of the making of the mace, are repeated.

It is several days before the Master Reaver is well enough to lead the other senior clergy in simultaneous castings of cure *serious wounds*. Darthin uses this time to compound and purify the ointment with which the mace will be anointed. (It contains powdered ruby and lodestone, pure essential glowflower oil, and tingleberries harvested with a curved silver knife dedicated to Talos during the dark of the moon.) The scene shown in the vision is duplicated, and then the mace is left under guard at the altar for priests to say prayers of thanks to Talos over it.

All of the holy men and women of the temple, priests and novices, assemble the next day to hear the Master Reaver's directions. The *ritual of transference* is planned for several days later, and all clergy are ordered to either pray to Talos for that spell if they are able to or to pray for a *combine* spell instead if they are of lesser rank, so that all can participate. The ritual takes place, is successful, and is followed by an *awakening*.

Darthin then wields the mace, calling on its powers to demonstrate that they work. As hymns are sung to Talos, the Master Reaver casts *permanency prayer* on the mace, using a *blood link* spell first to transfer the necessary sacrifice of Constitution to a willing devout lay worshiper.

Talos decrees that the mace shall be a permanent magical item, requiring only recharging by a wizard casting *magic missile* to keep that power operable. The fire and healing abilities need no charges to function, and one *magic missile* spell put into the mace allows it to fire a dozen 1d4+ 1 *magic missile*, one or two in the same round (as the wielder desires). The mace can absorb a dozen of these *magic missile* spells at maximum to be recharged, and as a benefit from the god, they do not need to be placed into the *mace* with a *dweomer flow* spell. (They must be specifically targeted into the mace, however, to recharge it; they are not just automatically absorbed as if the mace were a *brooch of shielding*.) Darthin is charged by the god through a vision with the task of developing a priest version of *magic missile* to charge the mace with in the future.

## Priest Item Enchantment Spells

4th Level

**Dweomerflow** (Pr 4; Alteration)

Sphere: All

Range: 20 yards or touch

Components: V,S
Duration: 1 round
Casting Time: 7

Area of Effect: One person or one item

Saving Throw: Special

This spell can be cast in one of two fashions. In the first version, *dweomer flow* is cast on a spellcaster by another being or by the spellcaster himself or herself. The spell causes the *next* spell the recipient spellcaster casts to be unaffected in casting and particulars but to flow from the caster into a prepared receptacle instead of taking its usual effect. No saving throws are required or

permitted by the spellcaster or the receptacle. Appropriate receptacles include a *focal stone*, a *crystal ball*, or another item that can hold magics within itself, such as a magical item in need of recharging, crucibles temporarily empowered by spells to accept enchantments, artifacts, and the like. If the item is destroyed or later affected by spells that force it to disgorge stored magics, the "flowed" spell is released then.

Dweomerflow creates a resonating field between the recipient spellcaster and the item to be infused with a spell. If the item is not present or not within range when the spell takes effect, the dweomerflow creates a ghostly swirling radiance which fades if an alternative item cannot be found or brought within range within the single round of the spell's duration, and the spell is wasted.

A holy water font or consecrated altar can accept up to a dozen flowed spells to be released separately, one per round, at any time thereafter by any being of the faith the holy object is consecrated to who touches the altar and wills the magics forth. The targets, aims, and areas of effect of such magics are under the silent mental control of the being unleashing them, who need not be the caster of the *dweomerflow* or even of a class or level necessary to normally wield such magics. Any individual who is not aware of what magics are stored in a holy font or altar requires 1 round of contact with the holy object per stored spell to identify and gain control over such magics. One randomly chosen magic at a time is revealed—but only to beings of the same faith as the holy object or to wizards and priests employing *dweomer divination* or similar powerful magics.

Spells of fifth or greater level must be accompanied by an *abeyance* spell cast on the altar or spell vessel within 1 turn of their being flowed into it—or they erupt back out again, visiting their full effects, at a random time and at a random target or area of effect. (Previous *abeyance* spells cast into the same altar or vessel do not suffice to govern a newly arrived flowed magic.)

Most temple and shrine altars are imbued with powerful offensive spells by high-ranking clergy of the faith for lesser priests to use in defending the holy ground against intruders. Those planning to despoil an altar are warned that breakage of a holy object; its exposure to fire, lightning, or the touch of unholy water; or cold iron used to chisel away holy symbols or inscriptions almost always awakens stored magics—to take effect right where the cause of their activation occurs!

The second version of *dweomerflow* allows the spellcaster to transfer charges or stored spells from item to item, such as a charge from one *wand of lightning* to another or a spell from one *ring of spell storing* to another. When this version of *dweomerflow* is cast, a saving throw vs. spell must be made by both items involved. If the sending item fails its saving throw, *the dweomerflow* spell is ruined, but no charges or stored spells are lost. If the receiving spell fails its saving throw, the charge or spell being transferred is lost—sometimes with spectacular effects—along with the *dweomerflow*. In this version of the spell, the spellcaster must be touching both items involved to provide a "bridge" for the spell energy involved.

#### 5th Level

Abeyance (Pr 5; Alteration)

Sphere: All Range: Touch Components: V,S



Duration: Special Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: 1 focal stone or 1 magical item

Saving Throw: None

This spell may be cast in one of two forms. In the most commonly used form, this magic freezes another spell that has earlier been cast into a *focal stone* so that it will delay its execution indefinitely, not taking effect for years, if need be, until released by a *dweomerflow, wondrous web* or *holy vesting* spell; by the shattering of the *focal stone*; or by certain other spells that can extract magics from within such a magical prison. (It should be noted that *dispel magic* is not one of these.) The *abeyance* is broken by any such contact, freeing the spell to take instant effect, but if the contact is with a *dweomerflow, wondrous web,* or *holy vesting* spell, the *abeyance* fades but the stored magic is not released, being conveyed instead to another magical receptacle.

The second way that *abeyance* can be used affects only magical items (not artifacts). If the caster of the *abeyance* manages to directly touch a magical item with his or her bare flesh as this spell is cast, the next time the magical item is activated, its effect is delayed from taking effect for 1 round, and the *abeyance* dissipates thereafter.

Eternal Flame (Pr 5; Alteration, Necromancy)

Sphere: All, Elemental Fire, Necromantic

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: One item or body not exceeding twice the

caster's own body volume in size

Saving Throw: None

The name of this spell comes from a poetic name for magic attributed originally to the elves. *Eternal flame* can be cast to affect an item or a body. If this spell is cast on an object or body that has a volume more than twice that of the caster, it fails and is wasted.

Transmitted only by direct touch, this spell imbues an item with a receptive neutral enchantment that causes it to readily accept later magics cast or transferred (by dweomerflow spells, for example) into it. In other words, eternal flame allows magic to be fed into an item simply by casting spells in the normal way and choosing the item as the target, but then willing the spell to enter and not harm the item. (In other words, it makes a dweomeflow spell unnecessary unless a spell is being transferred from another item such as a focal stone.) One spell or magical effect per level of the caster of the eternal flame can enter the affected item without a saving throw being needed for the item, any chance of the transfer failing, or any damage occurring to spell or item. There is no time limit to this entry of powers, but the opportunity to imbue them is ended by the casting of an awakening spell on the item.

Note that unlike the *enchant an item* spell, *eternal flame* merely allows an item to hold enchantments within itself—it does not enchant the item so as to allow it to emit enchantments flowed into it as controllable powers. In other words, an item affected by an *eternal flame* spell bears a dweomer and may hold magics within it, but it is *not* a usable magical item until the magics to give it powers have been conveyed into it and an *awakening* spell successfully cast upon it. (In other words, this spell handles only the very beginnings

of the process that the *enchant an item* spell encompasses.) Unless or until power transfer occurs and an *awakening* spell is cast, the item is an item storing magic that no one can call upon in any controlled way—though if the item itself is shattered, the magics within it will usually find instant and explosive release.

This spell can also be cast on living, dead, or undead mammalian bodies by touch. It completely attunes body tissues to fully receive a spell. The next spell to come into contact with a body prepared by an *eternal flame* spell takes full effect, exhibiting maximum possible duration, beneficial effect, damage, or whatever—even if a saving throw is normally necessary for the body to be affected at all—and does not require the affected being to make any saving throw, system shock survival roll, or resurrection survival roll, even if one is normally imperative. (Note that a clerical turning or dispelling attempt is not a spell.) Two schools of wizardry spells are exceptions to this: enchantment/charm and illusion/phantasm. An *eternal flame* does not cause the effectiveness of enchantment/charm or illusion/phantasm spells to be changed for the affected body at all.

The material component of an *eternal flame* spell is a spark struck by the impact of an item bearing a dweomer from a rock, bladed weapon, or metal item that bears some sort of dweomer. (Neither item is harmed in any way by the spell.)

Focal Stone (Pr 5; Alteration)

Sphere: All, Elemental Earth

Range: Touch
Components: V S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 clear or translucent gemstone of crystalline

structure no larger in size than the caster's

balled fist

Saving Throw: Special

This spell transforms the internal structure of a clear or translucent gemstone of crystalline structure no larger in size than the caster's balled fist to enable it to receive and hold a spell dweomer (usually cast into it by use of a *dweomerflow* spell). At the time the spell is cast, roll an item saving throw for the gemstone vs. magical fire (rock, crystal vs. magical fire). Success means that the spell is successful; failure destroys the gemstone. Gemstones of above-normal quality may receive a bonus to the saving throw at the DM's discretion (usually from + 1 to up to + 3 for flawless or otherwise extremely exceptional quality stones).

The gemstone glows with a soft internal radiance once *focal stone* is cast (which in some markets raises its value), and it emits a faint dweomer. If immersed in a poisonous liquid, the *focal stone* turns a vivid purple and can be commanded by touch and will to *neutralize poison*. If so commanded, the *focal stone* dissolves and is destroyed, but it leaves the liquid safe to drink or touch.

A *focal stone* otherwise has no special properties; contrary to popular belief, it cannot reach out and trap spells cast near it or suck in passing enchanted creatures, though it is an ideal receptacle for the life force of a being using a *magic jar* spell. The *focal stone* spell does not prevent the *focal stone* from being shattered by deliberate attack la crushing blow, for instance), but does prevent it from being damaged by natural and magical heat, flame, lava, extreme cold, or mineral contamination. Shattering a *focal stone* immediately unleashes the full effects of any spell stored in



it in a manner determined by the DM. A *dispel magic* cast on such a stone does not affect it or any stored magics.

The material component is a pinch of any sort of opal dust.

#### 6th Level

Higher Consecration (Pr 6; Alteration, Evocation)

Sphere: All
Range: Touch
Components: V S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 2 rounds
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: Special

This spell dedicates an item to the service of the caster's deity, cleansing it of all other influences (especially those of other deities). The caster performs the prayer, touches the item, and an item saving throw is made. If the item fails this saving throw, it crumbles to dust or is consumed by fire. If it succeeds, the item is cleansed and dedicated to the deity. Typically, the success of the spell is demonstrated by the item briefly levitating and exuding a blue-white glow, but a deity may choose a different color of radiant glow, may wreath the item in unending flame, or may even make it vanish if the casting priest is deemed unworthy or unready to possess the item or its continued possession by the faithful is imperiled by events, such as an impending attack on the temple where the spell is cast.

The item's saving throw is the same as the caster's own saving throw vs. spell, modified by the following cumulative factors: + 1 if the item has been specially crafted by the caster or others dedicated to the service of the deity; +1 if the *higher consecration* is cast on an altar consecrated to the deity or ground sacred to the deity; + 1 if the item is being prepared at the command of the deity (either expressly or through dream visions); +1 if all of the material components have either been made or gathered personally by the caster; -1 if unholy water is omitted; -1 if holy water is omitted; -2 if plain water is used; and -2 if the caster knows the item is physically flawed or incomplete.

The material components for this spell are the priest's holy symbol and a spark struck from flint by a piece of cold iron (spark, flint, and iron are all consumed in the casting); a pinch of earth from a dung heap on which plants have grown; a drop of holy water; a drop of unholy water; and a vial of air from a cavern, room, or passage in which a dragon used its breath weapon within 1 turn of the sealing of the vial.

Holy Might (Pr 6; Alteration) Sphere: All, Creation

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 9

Area of Effect: One item no larger in volume than twice the

caster's body volume

Saving Throw: None

This spell serves to strengthen inorganic substances so they do not rot or age. The caster touches one item, which may be crafted of any number of inorganic substances joined together but must not be larger in total volume than twice the caster's body, and *holy might* takes effect. Organic substances, such as glues, can be present in the object, but if they make up more than a tenth of its total

volume, the spell fails. Any fractures or weaknesses existing in the item are purged, so that it is whole, looks like new and is free of blemishes. In addition, fragile substances are hardened, and hard substances made more resilient; an item treated with *holy might* gains a bonus of +6 on all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, disintegration, fall, normal fire, and cold.

The material components of this spell are a whole and unflawed ruby, emerald, or sapphire of not less than 3,000 gp value, a sliver or chunk of duskwood of the same size or larger than the diamond, a piece of chitin of about the same size from a beholder, ankheg, or bulette, a piece of obsidian of any size, and a black dragon acid.

Holy Vesting (Pr 6; Alteration, Evocation)

Sphere: All, Creation
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 turn + 1 round/3 levels

Casting Time: 3 rounds Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: Special

This spell is used to imbue readied items with magical powers. The caster touches first the destination item and then any other items that hold magic that is to be drained into the destination item. The items to be drained may be potions, spell scrolls, parchments with magical command words or inscriptions, *focal stones*, or existing magical items.

A holy vesting creates a shimmering disturbance in the air between the readied recipient item and any items being drained. This shimmering remains visible until the spell ends, whereupon it fades. One power or control property is transferred per round to the destination item. The absorption of powers can often be seen by observers due to the sequential disappearance of focal stones, spell scrolls, and the like. Powers and magical controls drained by a wondrous web are transferred intact to the destination item and there combined harmoniously, being held within the item in stable magical stasis until the item is awakened by use of an awakening spell. (Control conditions are attached to the magics they are intended for, powers that are to work in sequence are arranged that way, and so on.)

Only existing magical items are allowed a saving throw against this spell. Any item having less than three effects or functions has a base saving throw of 9; any item with four or more effects or functions has a base saving throw of 11 and adds one point per function beyond four. If the item successfully saves against the effect of *holy vesting*, it is unaffected. If it fails, the *holy vesting* draws a random function out of it. If any of its effects or functions drain charges to function, they are affected first, and 1d4 charges are transferred per round, not the ability to perform the function. For items lacking charges, the ability to perform the effect is permanently taken from the item, possibly destroying it or rendering it nonmagical. The *holy vesting* spell provides no mitigation or protection against any explosive effects that might be built in to the destruction of an item.

Holy vesting can be ended prematurely if the caster so wills. Whichever magic is in transit (if any remain untransferred) when the spell is ended is ruined and lost, but those that have already entered the destination item are unaffected, as are the powers or properties not yet taken from their original holding places, A dispel magic also disrupts a holy vesting spell if the spell is not being



performed on an altar dedicated to the caster's deity (which provides it immunity from this spell), but other magical attacks (short of a properly worded *limited wish* or *wish* spell) do not affect it. Missiles or thrown weapons that strike the caster of a *holy vesting* while the spell is being cast have the normal likelihood of ruining the casting of holy vesting, but once the spell is cast, they have no effect on its progress unless the caster loses consciousness or perishes, which ends the holy vesting prematurely as described above.

The material components of this spell are one drop of holy water consecrated to the caster's deity for the item to be imbued, one for each source of magic to be connected to it, and a stick or block of burned incense.

#### 7thLevel

Awakening (Pr 7; Enchantment, Invocation)

Sphere: All, Creation
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 3 rounds
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is used to activate a touched magical item bearing multiple enchantments or exhibiting multiple functions. It is an alternative to the better-known *enchant an item* spell, but accomplishes less. To create a magical item with an *awakening* spell, several other spells must be used first, including *eternal flame* and usually *wondrous web* or *holy vesting* and *various dweomerflow* castings. *Awakening* can be used on a magical item that has been created with an *enchant an item* spell if additional powers are added to the item after its initial creation and enough use of the item has occurred to call upon all of the original powers at least once.

When the spell is cast, the item must make a saving throw to determine if the *awakening* has been successful. The item's base saving throw is the same as the caster's saving throw vs. spell, modified as follows: a -1 penalty per being other than the spell-caster who cast spells on the item during preparation or contributed magics that were put into the item before the *awakening* attempt (unless those beings are clergy members of the same faith as the caster of the *awakening*), a +1 bonus per *meld* and *crown meld* spell existing on the item, and a +1 bonus if *both* an *eternal flame* and a *Veladar's vambrace*, *holy might*, or *Nulathoe's ninemen* spell were cast on the item before the awakening attempt, and a +1 bonus if the *awakening* is cast on or before an altar of the deity of the caster's faith. These bonuses are cumulative, but a roll of 1 is always a failure.

The failure of an *awakening* attempt means either the item crumbles to worthless dust or explodes violently. Roll 1d6; a result of 1 or 2 means an explosion occurs similar to *a fireball* centered on the item that deals 1d6 points of damage per level of the *awakening* caster and in addition destroys the item utterly. A roll of 4-6 means that the item collapses into dust. A wind will rise from nowhere to carry this dust away, and even if some dust is somehow retained, it is magically inert and worthless.

Success of the *awakening* attempt means the item is *awakened* instantly into operation. It functions perfectly, though if the creator has been careless or inattentive in his or her preparations, the item's performance may involve some surprises. A successful *awak-*

ening may be heralded by a flash of light from the item, but this effect is never a harmful discharge of wild magic or item powers.

The material components for this spell are a single priest spell scroll bearing at least as many spells as the item has functions, a gem of any sort of not less than 2,500 gp value each for each item function, and a living plant that has been altered by magic. Some sages believe an *awakening* is more likely to succeed (an additional +1 bonus to the item's saving throw at the DM's discretion) if a random dweomer-bearing component is also present in the spell-casting components.

Blood Link (Pr 7; Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 sentient creature

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell can only be used in conjunction with a *permanency* wizard spell or a *permanency prayer* priest spell. It must be cast within 1 turn preceding either of these spells to have any effect at all

A *blood link* enables a caster to drain another sentient creature of the 1-point Constitution loss involved in casting a *permanency*-related magic. Unwitting or unwilling target creatures gain a saving throw to break a *blood link*, avoiding this loss. The caster must touch this target creature. If the creature is able to move, hostile, or suspicious, a successful attack roll is required.

Note that use of this spell is not a good act; good- and neutralaligned casters imperil their moral standing unless there are divine commands or other circumstances mitigating the spell's use (such as a willing worshiper of the same faith or a loved one desiring to make the sacrifice for the spellcaster). The DM must adjudicate such situations.

The material components of this spell are a short length of chain carved from zalantar wood, a drop of blood, a drop of holy water, and a drop of unholy water.

#### Dweomer Divination (Pr 7; Divination)

Sphere: Divination
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3 rounds
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: None

This spell reveals things about a touched item in an unfolding process that continues until all information about the item has been gained or the spell duration expires. If the same caster employs another *dweomer divination* on an item already examined by him or her by use of this spell, the magic skips over information the caster has already gained to reveal new information.

In the first round of a *dweomer divination*, all dweomers present on the item or linked to it are revealed; on the second round, any alignment or class restrictions or special benefits associated with the item are identified; in the third round, the primary function or most powerful dweomer on the item is fully revealed—in other words, *how* it works—to the *dweomer divination* caster; dur-



ing the fourth round any word of activation or command process associated with that primary power is revealed; and on the fifth round, anything wrong with, or missing from, the functioning of that power is clearly and fully identified. These successive rounds of inquiry occur even if there are no words or magical problems associated with the power, and at the end of each round, the caster is made positively aware of such absences.

On subsequent rounds, this process is repeated for any additional item powers or properties after the primary or most powerful one in descending order of intensity of their dweomer or importance of their effect until all item powers have been explored. (In other words, the cycle of rounds three through five repeats as necessary.) The spell then turns to revealing any additional control words or operating restrictions on the item for a round (such as special purposes or personal linkages), recharging methods or the confirmed absence of same on the next round, and some images of how the item was made on subsequent rounds.

Note that all information gained after the first round occurs only for items that have been enchanted, not normal tools, furniture, or garments. Upon normal items *dweomer divination* essentially performs as a very sophisticated, but ultimately little more informative, *detect magic*.

A dweomer divination ends immediately if the caster neglects to touch or handle the item for an entire round or if the item is found to bear no dweomer. Note that a powerful spell that touches an item—a fireball blast that flings a weapon down a hall, for example—leaves a trace dweomer on the item for 1 day per level of the spell, so that nonenchanted items can still bear trace dweomers. Magics meant to be permanent or long-lasting and spells that wait quiescent indefinitely for specific trigger conditions to occur leave dweomers of much longer duration—months or years per spell level—on items in contact with them. The spell reveals the approximate nature of such associate dweomers, but not what their precise damage, extent, or trigger conditions were or are.

Note that a *dweomer divination* provides no protection against curses or magical traps placed on items other than to identify them in its unfolding process, and it does not delay or prevent such traps' or curses' normal functioning in any way. *Dweomer divination* may well also not reveal side effects of using an item that its enchanter did not intend or foresee.

Permanency Prayer (Pr 7; Alteration)

Sphere: All, Creation
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 3 rounds

Area of Effect: One item's enchantments

Saving Throw: Special

This spell renders the enchantments on an item permanent. No presently known form of a *permanency prayer* can cause the effects of cast spells to last permanently or render their effects permanent upon a being.

The caster of the *permanency prayer* touches his or her holy symbol and the item to be affected and calls upon his or her deity to accept the item's service for eternity. A saving throw is then made. There is a 12 in 20 chance that the *permanency prayer* is successful, cumulatively modified as follows: +1 if the caster

casts the spell on an altar consecrated to the deity or at a spot sacred to the deity; +1 if the caster has performed an exceptional service for the deity's causes within the season (and not cast any other *permanency prayer* spells); +3 if the caster is preparing the item in accordance with the commands of the deity (whether direct commands or those given through visions or dreams); -1 if the caster intends to make any use of the item for personal gain or aggrandizement; and -2 if the item is flawed, damaged, or incomplete.

Whether or not the spell succeeds—and a caster knows if she or he has or has not by the feeling of exaltation or chill foreboding they feel upon touching the item after the spell is done—the caster loses 1 point of Constitution (unless she or he has employed a blood link to transfer the loss of vitality to another being).

Ritual of Transference\* (Pr 7; Alteration)

Sphere: All, Creation
Range: 20 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: One item
Saving Throw: Special

This complicated cooperative spell ritual allows its participants to cast spells into a prepared item or being; to transfer charges of magical energy from one item to another; or to infuse an item or being with powers from another magical item, altar, artifact, or other item of great power. The usual use of the *ritual of transference* is to infuse an item with magic. The spell is sometimes employed to empower devout lay worshipers with the means to help in a mission or defend a holy place, but it is only rarely used to imbue priests with spells beyond their capabilities. The only powers that can be transferred into a being are those which are spell-like in nature; the ability of say, a *rod of lordly might* to change into a climbing pole or a magical weapon could not be transferred.

The caster must have touched the destination being or item (or one of its component parts) or at least one of the donor sources of magic at some time in the past, but no contact with them is necessary during casting. A droning chant is begun and must continue unbroken for the entire turn of casting, though the initial caster can cease to chant without ruining the spell if other participants are chanting.

Once a *ritual of transference* is begun to be cast, other priests can participate by casting their own *ritual of transference* or a *combine* spell and touching the caster of the original spell with their bare flesh. Once the turn-long casting of a *ritual* is complete, the spell lasts for another turn, and it is during this time that participants can cast spells of their own into the item or being. If a participant casts a spell at the wrong item or being (in other words, not the spell's designated recipient), the spell takes its normal effect, and the mistaken (or hostile) participant's involvement with the *ritual* is broken. Note that the *ritual* lasts for 1 turn following the initial turn of casting; additional participants do not extend its length by the casting of their own *ritual* spells.

Any number of spells or charges can enter the recipient item or person during the same round without causing harm or affecting each other, but all spells take their normal casting times. Charge transference is one charge per level of the transferring priest per



round. Magical item effects take 1 round each to transfer.

As each spell, set of charges, or magical item effect enters the recipient being or item, a saving throw is made by the recipient

If the recipient of the ritual of transference is a creature, the creature makes its usual saving throw vs. spell; every time that throw succeeds, the transferred spell or magical item effect successfully enters the being. Every time the throw fails, the magic dissipates and is lost. Spells and effects do not affect a being as if they had been cast at it or used on it, but become magic stored within the recipient under his or her mental control in addition to any memorized spells or natural spell-like powers they possess.

If the recipient of the ritual of transference is an item, its saving throw is a base 12 in 20 chance. Every time that throw succeeds, the transferred spell, magical item effect, or set of charges successfully enters the item. Every time the throw fails, the magic dissipates and is lost. Spells and effects do not affect an item as if they had been cast at it or used on it, but become magic stored within the recipient item that is used to imbue it with certain powers.

Both creature and item saving throws are cumulatively modified as follows: +2 per priest other than the initial caster that participates in the ritual; +1 if the recipient item or being is in or on an altar or other sacred spot or object; -1 for a spell or magical charge transferred into the recipient by a being other than the initial caster; -1 per priest participating who does not serve the same deity as the initial caster; -2 if any hostile magic is cast into the recipient or so as to affect any participating priest during the ritual of transference; and -5 per participant who is slain or deliberately wounded during the casting. Since repeated saving throws are made, events which occur during the ritual's duration only effect saving throws made after they occur. The ritual does not protect its participants in any way.

Beings who have had spells or magical item abilities transferred into them can use these stored magics in one of two ways: They may unleash them by silent act of will as the same spells or abilities they absorbed or they may absorb them as healing energy, transforming a stored magic into a curative effect upon themselves. Only one spell may be unleashed during a round, but any number of curative effects may be instantly performed during a round and may even be combined with a stored spell unleashing or the recipient being's normal actions for a round. Unleashed spells require no casting time, components, or skill at wielding magic, and their unleashed effects perform as if they were wielded by their original source caster or item. Curative energy gained is 1d4 points of healing for every spell level used up; a partially transformed spell cannot be cast forth, and extra points of healing gained above damage taken by the being are lost and wasted. Stored spells or magical item abilities remain until they are used by the spell recipient.

The material components are two properly consecrated holy symbols: the priest's own and another dedicated to the same deity that is consumed during the casting.

# Collected Words of Activation

Over the years, I have amassed a considerable list of words of activation for unknown magical items-that is, the items the words pertain to have become separated from the writings and cannot now be positively identified save by experiment. Proper use of such magics as dweomer divination discern most words of activation if one possesses an item and not the word, but much time and trouble may be saved by testing the item with words from the following list.

It should be noted that in the time after the fall of Myth Drannor, it became fashionable for several centuries to hide the actual trigger word inside a more easily memorized phrase. This practice fell out of favor because too many words of activation thus were everyday words<sup>23</sup> and so too many items were unintentionally triggered-often with fatal or disastrously destructive results. So, old items may well have simple trigger words.

Later, words described as "elegant nonsense" by one nowforgotten sage became widespread. They were used for their unusual but memorably distinctive sound, and there are even persistent rumors (aided by little chapbooks sold by certain wizards at every Mage Fair) that certain of these words are overwords that activate many items beyond the one they were originally linked to, though they do so sometimes imperfectly, accessing only one power of several or awakening only low-power effects. Some of the words gathered here were believed by those who recorded them-on the underside of a floor cobble in a deep dungeon in Castle Waterdeep, for example-to be overwords.

So those acquiring items of unknown governance are urged to consult this handy pool of words, uttering a prayer of thanks to Mystra that praises one Volothamp Geddarm while doing so. If her favor finds you, you will not be disappointed.<sup>24</sup>

## Suspected Words of Activation

Alabraunzor Alooshtabban Andorn

Araundeth

Baershoon

Balahond

Bedever Blaraun

Brindith

Challace

Chathond Dalash

Dlarbuth

Dontin

Durammath

Elember

Filjin

Elminster: Aye, and if the sky rains platinum pieces into thy lap ye probably won't be all that sad, either.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Elminster: Do not, for instance, utter the word "indubitably" when in the Hall of Floating Helms in the Palace in Suzail – unless, that is, ye enjoy being caught in the midst of swarming lightning bolt spells.



Gahoast Gochal Gortbalath Guth Halaugle Igathar Indralagar Iathoondar Kaltroot Kloktlann Koyth Loezvn Loryndalar Maerleergoch Nartheq Obaerambair Ooblar Oountokh Orblemar Orlaway Orzendar Phajdryn Porairatar **Ouelamtor** Ruthdass Salartryn Sansrar Shalasstalla

Soortyn Talagh

Tallarag

Theertar Tothtoin

Tryndluu

Undleovar

Vezarn Wiylethoene

Yallabar

Yeetleen

The Universal Material Component

For aeons elven, half-elven, and human wizards of Faerûn have searched for a legendary, ever-elusive, and possibly unattainable treasure: the universal material component. Many spells known to wizards and priests require rare, hard-to-get, or just plain expensive material components for their castings, and legions of mages have sought to find something that will do it all in powering spells so that they can dispense with the difficulties of acquiring larders of often unappetizing items needed to work the magic they desire to wield. Many are the frustrated notes in sorcerer's diaries about years of being hampered by the lack of some small flower, snail, or esoteric knickknack—the smallest toenail grown by a mimic assuming a humanlike form in the hours of darkness, slain by bladed weapons alone while in that shape and continuously lit by the rays of the waxing moon, for example.

Some of these difficulties are deliberate ruses introduced by twisted or cruel wizards: unnecessary ingredients added merely to hamper mages who follow in their footsteps. In this way, such devious folk slow the advances of apprentices and even extend their influence beyond the grave. Mages using spells crafted by others have no sure way of knowing when an ingredient is superfluous and when it provides an important element of control or a crucial element of stability. They have no choice but to follow a list of esoteric elements unless they want to risk their lives to uncontrolled magic or sudden explosions or spend months, perhaps even years, in painstaking and dangerous experimentation to modify spells or invent new equivalents of their own.

Many have tried that route, turning to verbal-only magic such as dragons use in a bid to circumvent all needs for material components. Although a few mages have made great strides in this research, certain magics—particularly more powerful effects—simply demand specific substances or the modified versions either do not work or are faltering shadows of what they should be. Verbal-only spells are always at least one level higher in difficulty than their materially fueled counterparts and often two levels higher; even the substitution of one material component for another often seems to inescapably bump a spell up one level.

Other mages, rewriting spells as they go, have tried to substitute one material component for another in a grand attempt to trim the small wagonload of necessary components for their spellhurlings down to a few standard substances. This has also met with some success. Gemstones in particular have worked well as alternative components for a surprisingly wide range of spells, except for incantations in the schools of alteration and necromancy.

Sages concerned with things magical have from the earliest days postulated the existence of a universal material component—and it is something many mages have searched for. In the days of Myth Drannor, some even gave their lives for this elusive goal. Many wizards and sages have taken the view that this is an idle fantasy, not something that truly exists, and that time spent searching for it is time wasted. But, just as many more wizards have excitedly announced advances toward the goal at Mage Fairs, as they twist yet another spell to function only with gemstone components.

Gemstones certainly seem the most versatile of known components, and it is widely believed that a gemstone treated in some as yet undiscovered way will prove to be the closest mages ever come to a universal component. Some sorcerers comment sarcastically that the expense of gems make switching spells to them hardly worth the effort of study and experimentation, but others praise the small size and imperishable nature of gems as advantages and point out that an ambitious wizard who is willing to do some work is easily able to earn coins by casting spells city folk or nobles need; only hermits, the lazy, or the obsessed need go hungry.

Still other mages claim that the universal material component will prove to be something touched by divine power—perhaps "the Tears of Mystra" or something similar captured in gemstone form. Whatever the truth, it is certain that no one has found a universal component yet—and that many mages have not lost the hunger for looking.

Recent exciting developments in this age-old hunt concern the brains and cranial fluids of deep, shadow, and topaz dragons and "drow dust." If a wizard can mix material from specimens of at least two of these three dragon species in a silver vessel, cast various still-secret spells into the oily, colorless mixture and carry the



result about in a glass or silver vial, allowing no other metals to touch it until it is actually used in casting, drops of this dragon dew will power any alteration and abjuration spells attempted. (Admittedly, the entire known range of such spells has not been fully tested.)

Drow dust is an older idea that has finally been given a some-what practical form. For centuries wizards have speculated that the mysterious radiations of deep layers of rock so often found in strong concentrations in caverns where drow dwell, which undoubtedly add much power to subterranean magics, could see use as a power component of magics in the sunlit surface world if only they could be kept effective there. Many methods of magically shielding or altering the form of drow magical items have been tried to keep what little radiations they possess intact and functioning, but all have been in vain until now—perhaps.

A certain mage of Kelazzan, one Harladryn, claims to have perfected a method of mixing dust from strongly radiant rocks, melted-down drow armor, or drow enchanted items with molten gold while still underground and casting certain cloaking spells on the resultant mixture that make the gold discs he produces (which resemble oversized gold coins) both strongly reflective and resistant to solar damage. Although the discs are attractive to thieves, large, soft and crumbling as anything made principally of gold is apt to be, and expensive, Harladryn claims that they last for at least a hundred spell levels each-and in some cases half that again. As a disc functions, the gold and radiant dust vaporize, so that the disc grows steadily smaller, and when it has powered its limit of spells, it vanishes entirely. However, much to the chagrin of those eager to repeat or utilize Haladryn's work, recent reports suggest that Harladryn has disappeared-although whether this is due to misadventure, otherplanar explorations, an extended expedition to gain more drow dust, or the wizard's capture or murder at the hands of wizards eager to obtain all the drow dust currently available in Faerûn for their exclusive use is a matter of lively explanation.

Some skeptical mages who purchased discs at a recent Mage Fair have reported great success in using the discs to power spells of the invocation/evocation school, but great difficulty in modifying alteration spells to function with them—and no success in employing them with other sorts of spells at all. So it seems that some known substances can serve to replace most of the components needed for the spells of a single school or, at most, two schools of magic. Spell modifications are still needed for most of these new wonder components to work, and many mages are suspicious of them, suspecting that those who peddle them have set lurking magics within them that eavesdrop on those who use them or wait to work some spell-treachery at a critical time.

Yet the search for "the Universal Wonder" continues—and more mages seem interested in it than ever before. Elminster has warned that the search for such a thing is a matter for "those blessed with the luck of the gods—or the very young, who still have several centuries to waste and as yet lack any weariness for battering their brows against unyielding walls of stone." Be that as

it may, the current candidates for development into, or that mark the way toward, the true universal material component include:

- · Various gems.
- Drow dust.
- · Dragon dew.
- · Powdered lich phylacteries.
- Distillate of wizshade phlogiston.
- Powdered magebane claws (of magebanes that have absorbed much magic).
- The brains of disenchanters.
- Items touched by the goddess Mystra.<sup>25</sup>

It is certain that folk who do discover a universal component—or even one reliable for all spells of one of the major schools—will both imperil their lives and make themselves rich and powerful beyond their wildest dreams. Lucky sorcerers who believe they have found the elusive Universal Wonder should hurry in disguise to Candlekeep, the Herald's Holdfast, or the House of Mysteries (temple of Mystra) in Elventree, and present a sample for independent verification to the personages there. The wizards of the world are waiting!

# Raw Materials: Genstones

The gemstones of Faerûn are many and splendid—even their identification is a vast field stretching beyond the scope of this guide. Here I have set down only what I have learned about gemstones having special uses in magic—for instance, in the crafting of items or in the augmentation of enchantments, not solely as raw material components. I must stress that I have much more to learn about lapidary. <sup>26</sup>

Stones come in seven rough categories, each one in general more valuable than the next: hardstones, ornamental stones, semiprecious stones, fancy stones, precious stones, gems, and jewels. The last six classes are reserved for gemstones and usually applied to stones of relatively small size. "Hardstone" is a collective term given in the Realms to natural substances valued for their appearance that are found in large quantities and lend themselves readily to carving. Such carvings can take the form of screens and panels, furniture inlays, figurines, bowls and trays, bookends, spheres, scarabs, beads, and rings (among other things). Artwork can also be carved in gemstones (intaglios or engraved gemstones) or the material carved away so that the artwork appears in relief (cameos). Cameos are most frequently carved in shells, although cameos made from banded stones are also popular.

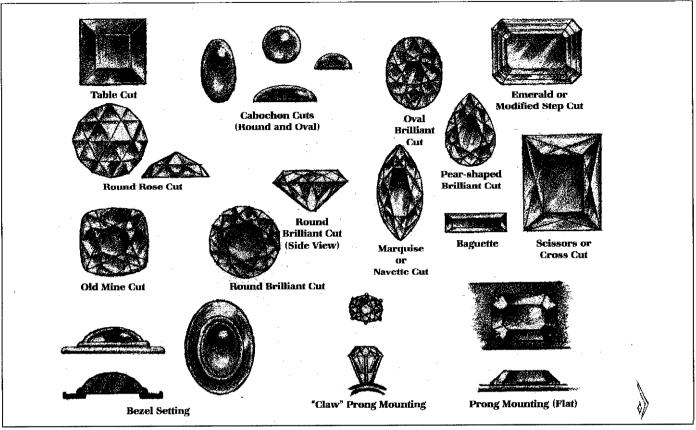
Many of the cheaper gemstones found in massive form are also cut for use as precious gemstones if of the highest value—of the most desirable hue and texture or of flawless composition. If not, they are sold by weight for carving. These include jade (jadeite and nephrite), chalcedony, agate, tiger eye, jasper, rhodonite

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Mystran priests at a temple (but not a lesser shrine or when traveling) normally will examine items free of charge to determine whether they have been touched by the goddess. They do not necessarily speak of any special powers an item may have that they discover in their investigations, unless they imperil its wielder, but they do answer whether the item has been touched by her.

Of the other items in this list, wizshades appear elsewhere in this book, various gems and some scraps of information concerning lich phylacteries are also discussed in this book, and disenchanters are detailed in the *Pages From the Mages* sourcebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Elminster: He indeed does. I have taken the liberty of liberally inserting more useful AD&D game terms throughout this section when Volo wandered off into vague or dangerous speculation or sheer foolishness.





Gemstone Cuts and Mountings

(phenalope), beryl, tourmaline, rock crystal, rose quartz, and serpentine. Softer and/or more brittle materials used for carving include amber, jet, obsidian, moonstone, turquoise, malachite, and opal. These weaker stones are rarely used for carving unless of low value.

**Agni Mani:** This black, irregularly shaped glasslike ornamental stone has fallen from the sky in meteoritic form to crash among the sands of Anauroch and other Faerûnian deserts. It is used in garments and the crafting of magical items because in all blasts (such as the explosions caused by *fireballs* and *beads of force)*, agni manis vaporize but protect beings wearing or carrying them by negating 1d4 points of damage per agni mani stone.

Alabaster: Alabaster is the white, finely textured, but brittle, form of gypsum (plaster). This hardstone is used ornamentally in the interiors of buildings in the Realms and is sometimes carved into containers and vessels of a delicate, decorative, but practical nature, such as vases and perfume and cosmetic jars (though such container are notoriously fragile). While able to be formed into vessels that are impervious to moisture and evaporation in the short run, and so often used as a container for potions, unguents, and ointments, alabaster has no known magical properties of its own.

Alestone: Brown to yellowish brown, the hues of old ales, alestone is named for its color. More properly called clinozoisite, this semiprecious stone is found in crystals and cut into faceted gemstones of handsome appearance. It is also known to some adventurers as a "scatterer" because it can deflect solid objects that approach it very quickly (such as fired arrows, slung stones, and

other hurled items). This forces any being trying to catch or snatch up an alestone to make a successful Dexterity ability check to perform the desired action and also increases the effective Armor Class of a being wearing or carrying an alestone on the side from which a projectile attack) is coming by 1. Increasing the amount of alestone does not further augment this protection.

**Alexandrite:** A greenish form of chrysoberyl which appears reddish under nonnatural light, including wizard's *light* spells, alexandrite is a transparent fancy stone usually cut into facets and mounted as a pendant or in earrings. Alexandrites are favored for focal use in any items of magic that confer good luck, favor, or protection,<sup>27</sup> such as *luckstones*, though many are used for *lodestones* as well.

Algae: Algae is a quartz ornamental stone that is covered with rich, dark brown, wavy patterns. It is sliced and used for inlay in belts, baldrics, or furniture or cabochon cut (polished glassy smooth and curved, without facets), and polished to bring forth the pattern. Algae resists changes in shape or state, and all beings or items wearing or otherwise in contact with any algae make saving throws against polymorph or shape-changing spells, spell-like powers, similar psionic sciences or devotions at a +2 bonus; they must save even if they are willing to be transformed.

Amaratha: Also known as shieldstone, amaratha is a soft, greenish white or very pale green, sparkling type of jewel. It is unique to the Realms and is found in the form of small lumps or nodules in deep rock strata. It is most often found in exposed canyon walls or in the Underdark. When cut and polished, such



nodules usually yield a dozen or more 1-inch-diameter smooth spheres (the base-price, most common amaratha stone). Amaratha is too soft and easily chipped or shattered to wear well in exposed settings such as rings, the tops of staves, or the peaks of ornamented helms, but it serves magnificently as a gemstone set in pieces of personal jewelry, ornamental armor, or other lapidary pieces worn in protected locations.

Shieldstone attracts and absorbs electricity in a 10-foot radius and can be used to protect those who wear it or accompany the wearer from lightning and electrical discharges. Static charges and the like are continuously absorbed by shieldstones without altering them in any way, but a piece of amaratha automatically neutralizes even the most sudden and powerful of electrical effects (such as an electric eel shock, lightning bolt, or the like). A 1-inch-diameter sphere of shieldstone absorbs up to 6 points of electrical damage; in absorbing the charge, the shieldstone is consumed, vaporizing at the rate of a 1-inch-diameter volume per 6 points of damage absorbed. (A 1-inch-diameter stone disappears, and a 2-inch-diameter stone becomes a 1-inch-diameter stone, etc.) If an electrical discharge exceeds the capacity of a shieldstone or group of shieldstones (such as several set in a necklace) to absorb it, all of the amarathas vaporize and the excess points of damage are suffered by those creatures or objects in the vicinity who would have normally been the targets of the discharge.

Amber: A golden or orange-hued, fossilized resin, this fancy stone is soft and brittle and is usually tumbled smooth and cut cabochon. Some amber contains other preserved fossils, such as primitive plants and insects. These variants with identifiable inclusions are valued much more highly in the Realms than clear amber, and command four or five times the prices of "empty" amber. Amber pellets strung on thongs are used as a medium of trade by northern barbarians, but these same pellets are graded and valued among civilized peoples as gemstones, not just currency. Amber is often used as a good luck charm to ward off diseases and plague and as a component of spells and magical items with healing- or diseased-related effects. (There is no evidence that it has any real power to protect against such afflictions.) In magical uses, amber serves as a spell component and spell ink ingredient in most enchantments that involve lightning and electrical discharges, from shocking grasp through chain lightning.

**Amethyst:** Amethysts are the most valuable of the quartz gemstones and are normally facet cut into brilliant shape. Related to agates and other less valuable quartzes, amethysts vary in purple hue from a lilac color to a royal purple, but the rich deep purple stones are most remembered and valued. Such stones are called by some *the crown of kings* because many Faerûnian rulers in olden times restricted the use of this gemstone to those of royal blood.

Amethysts are supposed to ward off drunkenness and convert poisons to harmless substances. These abilities are folk belief, not truth. Because of their attributed capabilities, these fancy stones are usually used as ornaments for mugs and chalices, particularly those used by nobles.

Amethyst is one of the "nine secrets"—types of gemstones that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells—and

also serves as ink ingredient or spell component in magics involving the communication of messages (such as *magic mouth* spells) and the augmentation of Wisdom. Amethyst represents safety when seen by seers, and romance when seen in the dreams of women. Magic-workers should use it at mornbright.<sup>28</sup>

Andar: Also known as andalusite, this hard, durable semi-precious stone is found as small, translucent crystals (sometimes as water-worn streambed pebbles) averaging ½ inch in diameter that flash green-red or brown-red when properly faceted. Andars are known to alchemists and adventurers as the easy half of the two alternative ingredients for a *potion of treasure finding*. They must be powdered and then boiled with a dragon scale of amethyst, gold, or silver; the scale is the difficult half of the two power ingredients, which must then be combined with an oily base using the process and enchantments that give the potion its powers.

Angelar's Skin: Angelar's skin (also known as aasimon's skin) is a fine pink coral suitable for use in jewelry. This fancy "stone" is usually found in shallow tropical seas upon isolated reefs or atolls. It is delicate and easily shattered unless properly treated and mounted. Angelar's skin is slowly sun-baked on large, flat rocks to drive off water and tiny dead animals present within it that otherwise would give it an offensive odor and reduce its value for adornment.

Found in shallow tropical seas on isolated reefs and atolls, Angelar's skin is associated in legend with the sorcerer Angelar, who became a wereshark (see the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual Volume Two) after eating this powdered coral, which had been mixed with sea water, and then receiving the cast spells polymorph self, water breathing, and Angelar's own wizard version of the priest free action spell. Angelar survived the transformation, emerging as a long-lived human who has complete control over his were-transformations into shark form; presumably, other wizards or individuals able to hire others to cast the necessary spells can, too.

Aquamarine: This type of precious stone is a hard, transparent blue-green form of beryl found throughout the northern reaches of Faerûn and much employed by barbarian tribes for adornment because of its durability. Aquamarine is known to alchemists as the sole reliable gemstone that, when sacrificed in a very secret spell process that I have not yet been able to get a copy of, can make other sorts of gemstones multiply: That is, a ruby or diamond vanishes and is replaced by two identical stones, each of which is a perfect replica of the original stone-even down to carvings or scratches. This Organil's ritual is a closely guarded secret of someone in Telflamm, who has used it to make gemstones enough to buy mercenaries and prevent the city from being overwhelmed by Thay on a number of occasions. The discovery of a well packed full of identical rubies-several thousand in all-in back-country Turmish hints that someone there is also familiar with this magic.

**Archon:** Archon is the name by which fluorspar in large quantities of less desirable color and grade is known in the Realms. Also known as Blue John, this soft, readily carved, purple-and-white hardstone glows with a faint greenish radiance if magically invisible (not disguised or ethereal) objects or creatures come within 20 feet of it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Elminster: In other words, all items that aid the wearer's or bearer's saving throws or turn aside some or all of the effects of an attack.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Elminster: In this context, "mornbright" (a minstrels' term) means a half hour centered on 8 a.m. If a being wears as many (or morel whole amethyst stones of the purest quality as she or he has points of Wisdom, they confer the same magical defense adjustment and spell immunities as a Wisdom score of 23 bestows (but not the bonus spells).



**Augelite:** A soft, fragile ornamental stone found naturally in clear, colorless crystals, augelite is easily worked without special skill or tools but does not last long in normal use for adornment, though it is often used for such by the Uthgardt barbarians and other primitive peoples. It cannot be carved into delicate or intricate shapes without splitting.

Augelite is magically inert, and in fact has the property of lessening magical effects in its vicinity. The damage done by a spell is lessened by 1 point per die within 10 feet of any augelite stone, and saving throws vs. all spells and magical effects are augmented by a +2 bonus within the same area of effect.

**Aventurine:** Sometimes called love stone, this semiprecious quartz gemstone contains many mica crystals that give a spangled appearance to the stone when it is viewed from the proper angle. Aventurine can be golden, medium to light green, or dark to pale blue in color. It is used for tumbled gemstones, cabochons, and ornamental inlays or carvings. It occurs in large deposits, and 20-pound blocks are not uncommon. Powdered aventurine is often used to penetrate magical disguises; its touch shatters most illusion and transformation magics.

Azurite: Azurite is a form of malachite slightly rarer than that mineral's banded, multitone-green normal color variety. This ornamental stone is a deep blue with opaque mottling in darker shades of blue. It is often smoothed from its irregular natural condition and used to ornament belts and rings. Its powers are akin to those of malachite but more restricted: Azurite prevents all heat damage to any being in direct (flesh-to-gemstone) contact with it. This lessens most fire and flame damage by half. Among certain Netherese, Halruaan, Myth Drannan, and (later) Calishite families, lucky tokens of azurite were tied to the body in hidden places (such as the armpits) for protective reasons (to lessen damage while cooking, for example).

Banded Agate: This opaque stone is a waxy, smooth form of quartz that has striated bands of brown, red, blue, and white stripes. While it is primarily used as an ornamental stone in inlays on furniture, in cheap brooches, and as "soothe stones" that merchants fondle to relieve tension during negotiations, banded agate is also crushed and placed into sleeping drafts in small amounts to insure a long and restful sleep. Although it does not increase the efficacy of sleep-related potions or spells, banded agate powder is used as a spell ink ingredient and a potion base.

**Beljuril:** Beljurils, also known as fireflashils, are unique to the Realms so far as any sage can determine. These jewels are found as smooth-surfaced, asymmetrical (but roughly spherical), fist-sized stones. They occur in old rock, and most frequently are quarried from blue claystone. They are durable and very hard, and cutting one typically wears out several sets of metal tools. Because of this, beljurils are usually worn whole or simply split in half in pectorals or shoulder plates that are fashioned with pronged (claw) settings. No beljurils significantly larger or smaller than approximately 3 to 5 inches in diameter have yet been found.

Normally a deep, pleasant, sea water green, beljurils periodically blaze with a sparkling, winking, flashing light. This discharge is pleasantly eye-catching in a candlelit great hall or a lantern-lit dancing grove, but in a dark chamber or the murky night, it is dazzling. At random, beljurils absorb some small amounts of heat, light, and vibratory energy from their surroundings (the area within a 30-foot radius around them) without negating that energy's normal effects. Periodically, they then discharge this stored energy in a sparkling

flash. Beljurils usually flash about once per hour, but rates vary from stone to stone, regardless of size or age and for no known reason. Their discharge is silent and cold; the sparks given off are few and do not carry a strong electrical jolt.

Beljurils are sometimes used in experiments by alchemists, sages, and artisans, but have not yet proven useful as a power source, but *wands of lightning* and other magical items that discharge electricity) fashioned with beljuril chips at their ends deal an additional 1d6 points of damage beyond the normal 6d6, and powdered beljuril is a prized ingredient in spell ink formulae and item enchanting baths for all things magical concerned with gathering, storing, or conducting electricity. The gemstones are often used for warning lamps or night beacons by the wealthy.

Black Opal: Black opal is a greenish type of opal with black mottling and gold flecks. Usually found in ancient hot springs or their dry remnants, this gem is most often tumbled smooth and cabochon cut. The Faerûnian phrase "Black as a black opal" means, effectively, not very black (or evil) at all. It is used to describe good-hearted rogues and similar individuals who would be embarrassed by praise. Those who work with magic know black opal as a potent explosive: When powdered and mixed with powdered orl and then introduced to any open flame in a particular way, the result is a violent explosion that does 6d8 points of damage to all within 10 feet, 4d8 to all 11 to 20 feet distant, and 2d8 to all 21 to 30 feet distant. A saving throw vs. petrification is allowed to sustain only half damage, and whether owner's save or not, items must make a successful saving throw vs. disintegration if within 10 feet or against crushing blow if 11 to 20 feet away or be destroyed. Items need not save if beyond 20 feet from the blast.

**Black Sapphire:** Black sapphires are a rare variety of sapphire that is a deep, rich black with yellow or white highlights. These jewels come mostly from the South, in particular the Great Rift, as they are most plentiful in the Deep Realm of the dwarves and are brought up through the Great Rift to the surface world for trading. Dwarves prize them highly, as do a growing number of wizards who have learned that once a black sapphire has been cut and polished, it prevents *temporal stasis, time stop*, and all chronomancy wizard or priest spells and time sphere spells from functioning within 30 feet of it. Such magics cease to function if a black sapphire is brought within 30 feet of their areas of effect. (Some resume operation after the gem is no longer present, and others are ended, according to their natures.)

Bloodstone: Bloodstone is a dark greenish gray variety of semi-precious quartz gemstone flecked with red crystal impurities that resemble drops of blood. Ninety percent of the bloodstones in the Realms come from the Vaasa/Damara area (the Bloodstone Lands), and most of those come from a single mine that is manned by human, dwarf, and gnome miners. Bloodstones are the chief export of this region, and as a result, they are readily found throughout the Inner Sea lands. The output of this mine is so plentiful that the stones are used, uncut, as currency along the Sword Coast, in the Moonsea North, and among mercenaries all over the Realms. When worn as gemstones (typically by farmers and foresters who have little wealth to spare on such things), these semiprecious stones are usually cabochon cut with beveled edges into smooth ovals.

The magical uses of bloodstone are many. It has long been known that a single bloodstone and a leafy spring of the herb heliotrope can serve as alternative material components for the *invisibility* spell without altering the magic in any way, but fewer



priests and wizards by far know that the gemstone can serve as an alternative material component in most divination and storm-related magics. A bloodstone laid on an open wound acts as a bloodstaunch, closing the wound, banishing any disease or blood poisoning, and stopping bleeding instantly. It cannot heal damage that has already occurred and dissolves in conferring this boon. Bloodstone healing only works on a particular being once per month (lunar cycle).

Bluestone: A colloquial name for the ornamental stone sodalite (sometimes called ditroite), this soft, brittle gemstone is rich blue and sometimes veined with pink, cream, white, and yellow. It can be found in old and weathered rocky environments such as the Galena Mountains, the Storm Horns, and the Thunder Peaks, where it is plentiful. It is usually cut cabochon or tumbled in barrels of gravel and sand, because it is very rarely hard enough to be cut in facets. Powdered bluestone added to plain water lit by any magical radiance yields a potion that acts either as a *neutralize poison* or heals 1d2 points of damage. If added to any magical healing potion, it adds both a *neutralize poison* function and an additional 1d4 points of restorative boon to the draft.

**Blue Quartz:** This ornamental stone is a transparent, pale blue crystal usually employed only for adornment. In rare cases, blue quartz crystals can be fist-sized or larger, and in olden times these were the favorite jewels for *gems of seeing*. These days, blue quartz sees use as a material component in scrying spells and, when sliced and properly treated, in the making of the magical cusps known as eyes (*eyes of the eagle* and the like).

**Boakhar:** Also known as wulfenite, this extremely soft and fragile semiprecious stone sees some use in ornamental situations because of the brilliant red-and-orange flash of the translucent gemstones cut from its flat red and orange crystals. Most often seen in old Sembian and Calishite furniture adorning inlays, boakhars erupt in jets of flame if a *magic missile* spell is cast or a moving *magic missile* passes within 10 feet of them. Such jets are 7 feet long, last for 1 round, consume the gemstones, ignite flammable substances they touch (but never anything touching the gemstone they come from), and deal 2d4+2 points of damage to creatures that come into contact with them.

**Brandeen:** Also known as stibiotantalite, this rare, hard mineral yields small reddish-brown to honey-yellow faceted fancy gemstones which are worn by many merchants and courtiers who are unable to afford more expensive gemstones. Brandeen's magical use is as a cure for deafness. It is powdered and added to the sap of any living hardwood tree, a *message* spell is cast on the mixture (the message consisting only of vowel sound utterances). The resultant potion, which must not see sunlight unprotected, must then be drunk within a day.

**Carnelian:** Also known as sard, this is the clear reddish or reddish-brown form of chalcedony. Tumbled smooth or cut cabochon and polished to a high gloss, this semiprecious stone is used as an adornment. Though seers consider that dream visions of carnelians mean misfortune will come, the gemstone is used by mages to make *luckstones* and items that protect against evil or harm, and as a material component in spells concerned with the same ends.<sup>29</sup>

Chalcedony: Chalcedony stones are often very large and are used in the carving of statuettes or coffers. Chalcedony is usually cabochon cut and polished, looking rather like ivory when finished. Varieties of this semiprecious stone are mostly white, but rare variations slip to gray or black. The more colorful variants of this translucent stone include carnelians, chrysoprase, and agates; in Faerûn, the term "chalcedony" is used to refer to all the rest of this sort of gemstone.

Chalcedony is used in the making of magical items that ward against undead or have necromantic powers, particularly when human bone is to be avoided because the undead to be controlled or resisted are nonhuman in origin. Powdered chalcedony can be enchanted with a simple spell to make it a tasteless, safe antidote to alcohol—so that when a pinch is added to a drink, no drunkenness results. (Spies and covert agents often use this powder to remain sober during long feasts.)

Chrysoberyl: This hard, transparent green fancy stone is usually facet cut for adornment. One of the "nine secrets" (types of gemstones that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells), chrysoberyl is used in enchantments that protect against *magic jar* spells, other hostile forms of possession, and similar necromancies, and in the making of weapons designed to strike incorporeal creatures such as certain undead. It also has medicinal uses, can aid in divination and scrying magics, and of old was used by certain Netherese sorcerer-kings in message stones that would utter magically recorded speech when touched—treasures collected today as inspirational utterances, heart-stirring words of passion, valued instructions in the working of magic, or directions to hidden treasures.<sup>30</sup>

Chrysocolla: Chrysocolla is a translucent variety of chalcedony that has been colored blue-green to green by traces of copper. This ornamental stone is most highly valued when of uniform color and free of inclusions (flaws caused by the incorporation of other minerals and impurities into its structure). Most specimens are tumbled for use as earrings and pendant stones; some chrysocollas are faceted for the same uses. It neutralizes alcohol upon contact and is also a valued ingredient in *animate dead* spell inks and related castings (often used as a powder thrown into a fire).

Chrysoprase: A translucent chalcedony with an apple-green color, this semiprecious stone is found throughout the Realms, but its greatest concentration is in the Storm Horn Mountains of Cormyr, where it is called stormrock. A popular pectoral and earring adornment for Cormyrean ladies, chrysoprase is also used in the making of magical items and spell inks concerned with invisibility and as a material component in spells concerned with both invisibility and seeing invisible beings and objects. It is also one of the "nine secrets" (types of gemstones that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells).

**Citrine:** Also called false topaz, this semiprecious stone is a transparent yellowish quartz. It cleaves well and is usually cut into facets in brilliant or marquise styles. It has the magical property of preventing *magic jar* attacks from affecting any being wearing or carrying a citrine. Conversely, whole citrines are a favored gemstone for use as the "jar" itself in the casting of *magic jar* spells.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Elminster: Carnelians aid all saving throws and ability checks of those who wear or carry them by 1 point—and in moments of extremis, a carnelian that has earlier been properly enspelled can be sacrificed by a being touching it to gain luck. The gem vanishes in a flash of light, and a saving throw, system shock or resurrection survival roll, bend bars/lift gates roll, or ability check that has failed can be attempted again at a +2 or 20% bonus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Elminsrer: Chrysoberyl dust, mixed with the juice of a certain crushed flower, is a sure medicine against mummy rot and all molds and fungal growths, stopping them instantly when directly applied to an affected body part. Any weapon forged with chrysoberyl chips or stones melted into its metal (accompanied by the appropriate and little-known enchantments) can strike ethereal and gaseous foes at all times.



Clelophane: Clelophane is the exceptionally beautiful pale green variety of sphalerite (a rock called zincblende or blackjack). This semiprecious stone yields transparent gemstones of green flash (color-play reflection) and unusually large size. Faceted specimens 3 inches across have been cut. Clelophane is, however, soft and fragile, and such gemstones wear quickly.

The only known magical property of this gemstone is the "echo effect": If a spell is cast by or on a being wearing, touching, or carrying a clelophane, that gemstone is 70% likely to record a still and silent mental three-dimensional image of the being, their surroundings, and the situation. This image is in turn 70% likely to obliterate any and all previous echoes recorded by the stone; otherwise, a new image is added to any previously recorded images. Such echoes can be called forth repeatedly from the stone by grasping it and mentally willing them to appear. They manifest beside the stone, visible for all to see, and are slightly luminous (in other words, they can be seen in the dark and even used as a very dim light source by those lost in darkness); such echo displays last for 3 rounds.

Echoes can be called up as often as desired and persist until replaced, even if hundreds of years pass. They are always of perfect lighting and sharp clarity, even if the original situation was confusing or obscured, and the scene they originally record fills a 10-foot-radius globe centered on the stone, appearing in at a similar size next to the stone when replayed.

Coral: Coral is formed by small animals that live in the warm seas of the Realms, including the Sea of Fallen Stars. The pink and crimson varieties of this fancy "stone" are considered valuable enough to class as ornaments and be treated as gemstones. Sunbaked to dry them and drive off any smell of rot, coral pieces are smoothed and polished for carving purposes and used as the stems or leaves of mock flowers that are then set with gemstones. It has long been known in the South of Faerûn that powdered coral is an extremely effective ingredient in the making of potions of healing and of extra-healing. (When determining the hit points restored by imbibing drafts containing coral, reroll all results of 1

Corstal: This ornamental stone is more rarely called petalite. This rare mineral is found in crystals ranging from colorless to pink. It is fairly hard, brittle, and commonly has inclusions; when free of these impurities it can be faceted, but otherwise it is cut cabochon. Worn for adornment mainly by nomadic tribes and poor folk, corstals have only one known magical use: When touched by a magical radiance of any sort (from a fiery blast to a faerie fire), they mirror the hue and intensity of that light within themselves, becoming light sources for 2dl2 rounds before the radiance suddenly fades away again.

Crown of Silver: Crown of silver is the colloquial name for psilomelane chalcedony, a variety of chalcedony containing abundant, minute plumes of black manganese arranged in bands. These bands polish to a brilliant, metallic black. Crown of silver is an ornamental stone usually sliced and polished for inlays so as to best show its black bands, but it can also be tumbled or cut cabochon.

Crown of silver prevents rusting when powdered and applied to ferrous metals. It sees use in spell ink and as a casting component of the everbright spell, and can also serve in place of iron filings in most castings (such as the clerical protection from evil magic).

Datchas: The common name for the semiprecious stone datolite is datchas. Pink datolite is also called sugar stone. Datchas is cut into faceted gemstones of very pale yellowish green if of the fine variety. Massive datolite, colored by copper and other minerals, is found in the form of warty nodules up to 10 inches in diameter. Such nodules range from white to red, reddish brown, and orange. The most valuable gemstones of the massive variety are orange, and all massive datchas are usually cabochon cut or sliced and polished for inlay work. If powdered datchas is ingested by a wizard (washed down with any nonalcoholic liquid), it doubles the duration of a spider climb spell affecting him or

Diamond: Translucent jewels that catch fire when properly faceted, diamonds are hard, translucent jewels that can be clear (appearing blue-white), rich blue, yellow, or pink, among other hues. The hardest of gemstones (save for a few very rare types unique to the Realms) and among the most valuable, diamonds are found in scattered locations throughout the mountain ranges of the northern half of Faerûn and in current or former volcanic regions across the face of Toril. Many of these locations are far underground, making them only accessible to dwarves and underground races that trade with the surface world for other goods. Diamond can be used to cut or etch glass, horn, bone or leather and so serves as a point or cutting edge on the finest artisans' tools. It is also worn as adornment.

Diamond dust is almost a universal ingredient in spell ink formulae, serving whenever one lacks a substance specific to the magic at hand. It is particularly suited to spells concerning vision, divination, or locating objects. The best gems of seeing are diamonds, and diamonds are essential adornments in a helm of brilliance.

Conversely, diamonds worn at the throat or on the head ward off dream visions and enchantment/charm magics.<sup>31</sup> In some magics, diamond dust is poisonous, but when combined with certain substances in a secret process, it creates both sweet water potions and empowers both spell inks and item baths concerned with the neutralization of poison. Diamonds are best used in alchemical and sorcerous work at highsun.<sup>32</sup>

Dioptase: A soft, brittle semiprecious stone of vivid emeraldgreen hue, dioptase (also known as diopside) is found in tiny, flawed crystals and yields only the smallest of faceted gemstones that are used in figurine adornment or to decorate lace. Larger specimens are extremely rare and highly valued, commanding the same prices as more valuable color and clarity variations.

In two turns dioptase dissolves in liquids that have already been enchanted by any spell effect-and each gemstone that is so dissolved restores 1 hit point of damage to a creature who drinks the resulting mixture. Few folk in the Realms know of this alternative sort of potion of healing, but word is spreading.

Disthene: Also known as kyanite, disthene is an abundant ornamental stone that is easily cleaved, but difficult to cut in facets without unintended splitting occurring. It usually has many inclusions. Disthene is found in crystals ranging in color from dark blue to pale green. Translucent, blue, facet-grade crystals are the most prized. (Treat doubled base value versions of this stone as this fine blue variety.) Disthene sees magical use as a powdered

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Elminster: No dreams can come to one who wears diamonds on at least two "sides" of his or her head—and the presence of a whole diamond anywhere in direct flesh contact with the neck or head gives a +2 bonus to all saving throws vs. enchantment/charm spells and equivalent psionic sciences and devotions.



ingredient in spell inks and the spells themselves that involve controlled fiery effects (in other words, shaped flames as opposed to explosive).

Emerald: A brilliant green beryl, the emerald cleaves along straight, boxlike lines. This jewel is so often displayed with a particular rectangular faceted cut that the cut's name has become an "emerald" cut, and it is known—more properly—as a modified step cut only among gemcutters. Emeralds also lend themselves to the baguette or table faceted cuts. It is used for adornment, in spell ink formulae, as a spell component, in item enchantment baths, and (as whole, mounted gemstones) as a discharge point in items concerned with fertility, health, and growth. Emerald breaks to reveal falsehood and concealed hatred, and many kings have worn rings carved entirely of emerald to parleys to detect treachery and deceit without the use of spells. When employed in complex magical processes, emerald is best used at "waterclock."<sup>33</sup>

**Epidote:** This abundant ornamental stone can be cabochon cut or faceted. Its smallest crystals are clear, but larger crystals are progressively darker shades of red. A variety of epidote known also as piedmontite can be cut into large cabochons of a deep rose color. Epidote is prized as an ingredient in potions of *undead control* and in the inks used to write *protection from undead* scrolls.

**Euclase:** Euclase is a rare precious stone found in small, readily cleavable crystals ranging from colorless to pale yellow, vivid yellow, pale green, and blue. The blue stones are the most prized. (Especially valuable samples of euclase are blue euclase.)

Euclase reacts violently to magic: If a spell is cast on one of these gemstones or on a being wearing or bearing one, a *flame strike* identical to the area of effect of the priest spell of that name roars up from the gemstone, consuming it and dealing the usual 6d8 points of damage, or 3d8 if a successful saving throw is made, to beings in contact with it.

Eye Agate: Eye agate is similar to banded agate, but instead of striated bands, the layers within the stone appear as concentric circles. These rings are usually gray, white, brown, grayish-blue, and drab green. Like banded agates, these ornamental stones are often ground up and pinches of their dust placed in sleeping drafts, though its effectiveness in these drafts is pure folk belief, and in actuality the gemstone powder does not alter their normal effectiveness.

**Fire Agate:** Fire agate is the name given to chalcedony which contains thin lines of iridescent goethite (a rustlike impurity). When properly cut, the iridescence of this ornamental stone displays red, brown, gold, and green hues. The finest specimens are partly translucent, which allows the best display of color. (Treat improved variations of this gemstone as this translucent variety, ) Whole fire agates are dissolved in the blood of a fire lizard or pyrolisk to form the most favored base for *potions of fire resistance*.

Fire Opal: A brilliant orange-red type of gem, fire opals are usually uniform in hue or contain golden or greenish flecks. They

are most often found near active hot springs and geyser activity. Fire opals are often enchanted and are an essential part of producing *helms of brilliance*. More broadly, they are used in the ink formulae, enchantment baths, or as a discharge point of spells or items that cause, release, or control fire.<sup>34</sup>

**Flamedance:** This precious stone is an extremely rare translucent gemstone found in small crystals or fragments. It is hard and resists cleaving when worked, making it ideal for use in carving. It is usually used in lapidary work only when faceted gemstones can be cut from the crystals. A very pale yellow or green in hue, it sees magical use for the property for which it is named: It can withstand any fire, protecting items set with it and beings wearing it alike.<sup>35</sup>

Fluorspar (Fluorite): Fluorspar, also known as fluorite, is a soft, readily cleavable ornamental gemstone occurring in many colors, If the rough gemstone is pale blue, green, yellow, purple, pink, red or is physically small, it is usually cut into faceted gemstones. The pink or red varieties, sometimes known as cabra stones and are the rare, more valuable varieties. A massive, purple-and-white banded variety known as archon or Blue John is used for carving. In all of its forms, fluorspar has the same properties: It glows with a faint greenish radiance if magically invisible (not disguised or ethereal) objects or creatures come within 20 feet of it.

Frost Agate: Also known as frost stone, this rare, beautiful ornamental gemstone has frostlike white markings, It is usually tumbled and polished glassy smooth. A gemcutter of unusual skill (such as one possessing more than one nonweapon proficiency slot devoted to gem cutting) can cut the fragile stone into facets without splitting it so that at each point where the facets meet (such as in a polyhedron cut, which forms the stone into the shape of a d20), a snowflake of white "frost" appears. Enchanted versions of these stones are often *luckstones*. Lesser varieties are powdered and treated like other agates and used in sleep drafts and as ingredients in numerous potions. In all potions, as it seems to almost ensure peaceful (in other words, nonpoisonous and nonexplosive) potion miscibility.

Garnet: Garnets are general class of crystals ranging from deep red to violet in color. These precious stones are normally isometric in shape, with 12 or 24 faces to a typical crystal, though 36- or 48-faced crystals have been found. Garnets are found in granites and in metamorphic rocks, such as marbles, in a number of locations throughout northern Faerûn. Thought by some fading faiths to be the hardened blood of divine avatars, garnets are generally considered useless in magical work. They actually have the ability to double or treble damage done by weapons they are mounted on—when such weapons have been properly enchanted to call on this property. Such enchantments should commence at high morn. <sup>36</sup>

Gold Sheen: Gold sheen is a rare variety of obsidian that is golden in color and flecked with minute spangles. When used as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Elminster: When incorporated into them, emeralds give 2d4 additional charges to charged items concerned with growth or healing and enable such items to spontaneously recharge. Roll 1d6 per night; a result of 5 or 6 means 1 charge has been regained. Emeralds confers a +1 bonus on all item saving throws if mounted on such items and make the success of any enchantment laid upon them 25% more likely to succeed, Emerald only shatters to reveal falsity when worn on flesh that is in direct contact with the flesh of a living being that is the source of the falsehood. It does not break if its principal wearer tells lies—though many folk do not know this latter detail.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Waterclock" is an old term born of the phrase "the turning of the waterclocks" and means 2 p.m.; magical working or spellcastings involving emeralds performed within a half hour centered on that time are 20% more likely to succeed or be of the best possible outcome or result.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Elminster: A whole, mounted fire opal adds 1 point to each die of damage done by any fire-producing magical item it adorns. This bonus is not cumulative if several fire opals are used.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Elminster: In your world, this same gem is known as rhodizite. Flamedance stones and items set with them automatically save successfully against normal and magical fire attacks—and beings wearing one or many flamedance gems gain a +3 bonus against all fire-related saving throws.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Elminster: In this sense, "high morn" means a half hour centered on 11 a.m.



gemstone, gold sheen is usually tumbled so as to retain as much of the stone as possible and polished to a glassy, gleaming finish. This semiprecious stone is brittle but in the past was often used to ornament belts or shields. Chips of gold sheen are sometimes used as a form of currency among mercenary encampments. Added to any type of spell that creates a radiance, gold sheen allows the caster to precisely control the hue of the spell effect, and when added to invisibility magics, it increases the duration of such spells by 1d3 rounds.

Goldline: Goldline is the name given to quartz with lines of gold-colored goethite imbedded in it. It is sometimes called cacoxenite. The native quartz stone that forms the base for the goldline can be citrine, amethyst, or smoky quartz, and the goethite appears within this base as brilliant yellow or gold fibers or tufts that run in parallel lines. This ornamental stone usually occurs naturally in pieces 2 to 3 inches in diameter, and it is tumbled or cabochon cut for decorative use. Sometimes larger slabs of goldline are found, but these rarely survive travel unbroken. When consumed in an open flame in combination with the right spells, goldline is one of the easiest to obtain magical empowering ingredients to give a bladed metal weapon a bonus enchantment.

Greenstone: Greenstone is the common name of chlorastrolite, a gray-green variety of pumpellyite found in nodules of up to ¾-inch diameter in solidified lava flows. It is a soft ornamental stone and is usually cabochon cut. The finest quality greenstone can be polished to a glassy finish, and such stones are sometimes called chlorastras. Greenstones of exceptional size are made into greenstone amulets (protective devices that make the wearer immune to many mind-influencing spells, based on the protections of an ongoing mind blank spell), but not all greenstone jewelry is so enchanted. Often a ruse involving nonmagical greenstones and Nystul's magic aura makes such jewelry appear valuable when it is actually worthless.

The smallest and most flawed greenstones are ground to powder for use as material components in spells that resist mental attacking magic and other protective and barrier spells. It should be used with care: There are reports of it completely negating certain spells it was added to. It is also one of the "nine secrets" (types of gemstones that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells).<sup>37</sup>

**Hambergyle:** Hambergyle, also called hambergite, is a semi-precious stone that is found in crystal or fragmentary crystal form. It is rare, colorless, and fairly hard, yielding small, faceted gemstones. Its crystals can be held in a flame and a *light* spell pronounced over them to create (at the cost of the gemstone, which vaporizes) a *continual light* effect.

**Heliodor:** This precious stone is a deep yellow variety of golden beryl varying in hue from greenish yellow to reddish yellow and yielding large or medium impressive faceted gemstones. In magic, heliodor can be used as a casting component in all priest spells of the sun sphere in place of normal components that one lacks (provided these need not be specially constructed). Powdered heliodor is essential in the forging of a *sun blade*.

**Hematite:** Hematite is a shiny gray-black gemstone often cut in a baguette fashion (rectangular with beveled sides). These ornamental stones are prized by fighters and often used in magical periapts (both *periapts of healing* and *periapts of foul rotting*). They

are not magical in nature, though they are particularly responsive to enchantments, especially those dealing with healing and necromancy, because hematite has a magical affinity with blood and life forces. Even among powerful mages, few Faerûnians know that hematite is one of the "nine secrets" (gemstone varieties that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells).

**Horn Coral:** This precious stone is a deep black coral similar to Angelar's skin save for its solid color. It is also called night coral. Horn coral is used in jewelry as a polished twig or branch of material or is cabochon cut. Those who wear horn coral and touch it with one of their own tears can call forth its magical property (as the cost of the gemstone, which dissolves when the effect ceases<sup>38</sup>): It empowers creatures to *water walk* (as the 3rd-level priest spell) for up to 6 turns at a time.

**Hornbill Ivory:** Hornbill ivory is not ivory at all, but rather material from the beak of the hornbill bird. This hardstone is carved into items such as combs and beads or used for inlay work in stone or wood items of furniture. This tough substance can be employed as a material component in spells and in the making of certain magical items and tokens concerned with flight.

**Hyaline:** A milky (or white) quartz, hyaline is often set or inlaid in silver and is either cabochon cut or sliced into plates. The milkiness of this ornamental stone is caused by tiny droplets of water or gas (carbon dioxide) trapped in the crystals. Grains of gold often fleck hyaline. It glows with a blue radiance when active magic takes effect, is launched, or passes within 20 feet of it.

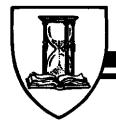
**Hydrophane:** Hydrophane is a gemstone much favored by sailors and aquatic races. This semiprecious stone is a variety of opal that is opaque and of a frosty-white or ivory color when dry. In this state, it appears rather unattractive. When soaked in water, it becomes transparent and iridescent, reflecting a rainbow spectrum of colors like a prism. It is usually cabochon cut or sliced into layers for use in inlays. It is also used in water-oriented items and potions, especially those conveying the ability to breathe water or control over water elementals. When used as an additional component in the casting of *color spray* spells, hydrophanes forces creatures to make a saving throw vs. the spell at a -1 penalty.

Hypersthene: Also known as bronzite, hypersthene is normally an opaque brown color containing silvery spangles, but it is sometimes reddish or greenish in hue. This semiprecious stone and is rarely found in untracked pieces larger than ½ inch across, and as a result it yields small gemstones. It is usually cabochon cut. Hypersthenes have the magical property of wyvern warding: If worn or carried by any being who encounters a priest's wyvern watch spell, they prevent their bearer from being seen or struck by the spell, so that the spell maintains its vigilance, but the gembearer can freely pass its warded area.

**Iol:** Also known as iolite, cordierite, or violet stone (despite its usual overall hue of blue), this semiprecious stone is usually cut into faceted gemstones to best display its color change when viewed from different directions. Iols so viewed appear straw-yellow, blue, and dark blue. Small, cut iols can be clear, but larger specimens usually contain silky inclusions of another substance that gives them an internal star effect or even trapped hematite crystals, which give the same rich golden flash of color as is found in sunstones. Iols have strong associations with magic in Faerûnian legend, but few folk know their true magical use: They are the best

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Elminster: Greenstone amulets are detailed in the ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™, Volume 1.

<sup>38</sup> Volo: Some special pieces of horn coral (the key to identifying them I do not know) do not dissolve but become inert for a turn, after which they may be reactivated.



sort of gemstone to transform (with the proper, secret spells) into ioun stones.

Iris Agate: Iris agate is a massive hardstone variety of agate much used in temples for effect. Its many swirling colors can be seen vividly when light shines through it, but it otherwise appears white. Its sole magical property is that of spell reflection: A spell that is hurled against a screen or statue of this material rebounds right back at its source. For this reason, false guard statues or silhouettes of iris agate are sometimes placed in vault doorways when magical attacks are expected.

**Irtios:** Also known as danburite, this hard, transparent-to-translucent semiprecious stone is found as crystals in deep rock or as water-worn pebbles in streambeds or gravel deposits. It is either colorless or a very pale yellow. Irtios crystals are often found on sword scabbards and wizards' staves because they prevent mildew, rot, and molds from affecting any organic substance they are in contact with. This protection includes yellow mold, mummy rot, and fungal diseases, and it can extend to a living or even undead creature if an irtios crystal is in continuous, direct-flesh contact with them.

**Ivory (or Dentine):** The substance that provides the teeth of all mammals is referred to as ivory or dentine when used for decorative purposes. Whenever the teeth or tusks are large enough, they can be used for carving-thus, ivory comes from elephant tusks, hippopotamus teeth, cachalot whale teeth, and the tusks of the walrus, narwhal, and boar. Tiny quantities of fossil ivory from prehistoric elephants, mastodons, and sabre-toothed tigers (smilodonsl are also encountered occasionally. In addition, ivory also comes from less commonplace creatures such as behemoths, mammoths, and umber hulks. The price of this hardstone depends on its hardness and durability, its hue and degree of mottling, and the shine it can be buffed to or type of surface treatment it can take. Prices depend on current preferences of style and ornament, and what is valued highly in a particular place or at a certain time can be nearly worthless elsewhere and elsewhen. Ivory provides an ornamental carving material for carried items, building decoration (and even construction in some fantastic instances), and clothing. Dragon teeth and the fangs of certain creatures of a magical nature (such as displacer beasts) have magical uses and properties, but the ivory of common beasts generally does not.

Unicorn horns (alicorns) are technically not ivory, since they are not teeth. It should also be noted that unicorn horns are not used for ornamental carving and that they command prices of thousands of gold pieces from alchemists, as they are held to have mystical properties including the abilities to purify water and food, cure poisoning and disease, return the dead to life, and convey youth and immortality. On a cautionary note, certain Faerûnian religions—especially followers of Mielikki and Lurue the Unicorn—take great exception to people hunting unicorns for their horns—or even owning unicorn horns, except in special circumstances. They have even been known to put to death people convicted of the evil act of killing unicorns.

**Jacinth:** Also called hyacinth or flamegem, this fiery orange jewel is a relative of the sapphire and other corundum gemstones. It is found only in the Realms; in other crystal spheres, an inferior type of garnet or essonite takes the name jacinth. At the heart of every jacinth a tiny flame flickers and dances—not enough to illu-

minate surroundings, but enough to be seen from afar. This property of the jewel forms the basis for many splendid cloaks and gowns worn by wealthy nobles. Powdered or whole jacinth is a valued ingredient in the making of potions and items dedicated to protection against fire, such as *rings of fire resistance*.

Jade: Jade is a class of fancy stone including both jadeite and nephrite. It is often found in a massive, carvable form of a lesser grade and is then classified as a hardstone. It appears as an opaque, waxy mineral of light to dark green or white. As jade ages, it darkens further to become a rich brown. Jade is said to enhance musical ability and so is worn as a lucky stone by bards and other musicians in the Realms.

In magical work, powdered jade is the preferred base for spell inks and used as a substitute for all nonorganic spell components for all illusion/phantasm spells. It is an essential ingredient in enchantment baths for magical items that cast illusions as any of their functions—and when so used, should initially be put into such a mixture at candleglass time.<sup>39</sup>

**Jargoon:** Jargoon is a rare, red variety of zircon much prized for its deep ruby luster. The name "jargoon" is often carelessly applied in the Realms to any large group of mixed gemstones, as in the favorite pirate catch phase: "a duster of jargoons, matey, with garnets as big as yer hand." This fancy stone is credited in legend with being able to prevent a lycanthrope from changing out of his or her human form, though this folk tradition has never been proven true.

Jargoons have a popular use in magic: If a *magic missile* spell is cast into a jargoon held in the caster's hand, the gemstone explodes violently (dealing the caster 1d4+2 points of damage), but the number of missiles hurled forth by the spell is doubled. In damage, unerring aim, and other specifics, they conform in all respects to the missiles created by an unaltered *magic missile* spell effect.

Jasmal: Jasmal is a durable, very hard gem. It is found in small veins or, very rarely, larger seam deposits in the Thunder Peaks and the Spine of the World mountains. When polished, jasmals catch sunlight or torchlight and give off haloes of amber light, although they themselves remain transparent and colorless. Jasmals are usually cabochon cut and thus appear as small, glassy globes of orange light when worn on cloaks or tunics.

Jasmal is so hard that it can hold a cutting edge and even be worked into small nonmetallic weapons or mounted in a row along a blade. In this latter use, it is prized for its ability to take multiple or complex enchantments that the strike of the blade can visit upon victims whenever the jasmals strike for damage. Powdered jasmal is also a favored ingredient in enchantment baths for magical armor and in the ink formula for the spell *Veladar's vambrace*.

**Jasper:** Jasper is an opaque quartz semiprecious stone found in reds, browns, and blacks. Vary rare specimens are blue or have bands of blue against the other colors. Crushed jasper is a universal substitute ingredient in the making of potions, antidotes, and magical items that protect against or neutralize poison—and drinks stored in vessels of carved jasper for at least a day (as is now done at the Palace in Suzail and many other courts) are leached of any poisons, taints, or corrosive powers they may carry. Jasper is the preferred stone for use in both *periapts of foul rotting* and *periapts of proof against poison*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Elminster: What jade really does for music-makers, when certain simple enchantments have been laid upon it, is confer perfect pitch and sharp hearing on all who wear it. In this context, "candleglass time" refers to a half-hour period centered on 9 p.m.



**Jet:** A deep black gemstone, this fancy stone is a tough variant of bituminous coal that can be facet cut and displayed either as a pendant or inset into a larger setting. It is the stone of mourning and sorrow in wealthy cities (such as those in Amn, Calimshan, and Sembia, as well as Waterdeep and Westgate), and remains a preferred material for *magic jars*, a use contributing to its fell reputation. Certain treatments of a jet stone (or specific spells cast too close to one) may well unintentionally free a furious, long-imprisoned mage or strange magic-wielding beast from its depths—or summon a wizshade to the spot. Some such imprisoned beings can use their magic in limited ways to try to bring about their release—but possession of their prison gemstones rarely gives one any influence over them.

Kings Tears: Sometimes called frozen tears or lich weepings, kings' tears are unique to the Realms and are very rare. These jewels are clear, teardrop-shaped, smooth-surfaced, and awe-somely hard; in fact, none have as yet been fractured, cut, or chipped, even by hammer and forge. The origin of these gemstones is unknown, but folklore believes they are the crystallized tears of long-dead necromancer kings and queens.

Sages value kings' tears above all other gemstones for the scenes that can be seen in their depths. In each gemstone, it is said, can be seen that which the weeping monarch loved long ago: in some, women or men; in others, lands now lost and forgotten or greatly changed with time; in yet others, bizarre and incomprehensible dream scenes and battles. It is indisputable that these scenes are so bright, sharp, and detailed as to seem alive—and that they are immobile and never change—but what they truly are is unproven.

The presence of a kings' tear within 90 feet always reduces the casting time of a *Legend lore* spell to 2 turns and causes a name, word of activation, or similarly crucial word regarding the spell subject to come into the caster's mind. An old and secret ritual, known to very few high priests, liches, and reclusive archmages, enables a spellcaster to permanently gain 1 point of Wisdom through the sacrifice of a kings' tear. A kings' tear can be cut to yield up to four *gems of insight* (if the proper enchantments are used). Finally, kings' tears have been rumored to be tied to the process of creating a *philosopher's stone*, among other magical items.

Kornerupine: Kornerupine is a hard, rare, brown or green, translucent fancy stone usually found in streambed or esker ridge deposit gravel that yields faceted gemstones of up to middling size. Brown kornerupines have no known magical properties, but if a magic mouth spell is cast on a green kornerupine and the last word of the incantation is left unsaid, the stone reveals a potent property. It can be carried indefinitely, and when the caster later touches it and utters the missing last word of the spell, the stone does not grow a mouth to utter the usual message, but instead records all sounds that can be heard within 20 feet of it for 4 rounds after the caster says the final spell word. Any number of beings may make the sounds, and noises made purely by items are also be heard when the sounds are called forth and "played back" for other listeners).

The stone holds these sounds forever—or until it is destroyed. It cannot be used to record other sounds, nor can the sounds be magically silenced or altered without shattering the stone. Such stones can and have been used to record solemn agreements, promises, speeches, whispering conspirators and lovers, and

bardic performances. Depending on what a stone has recorded, it *may* be worth many tens of thousands of gold pieces and that price paid gladly. (After all, what price can one put on words of love from a now-dead beloved or a superb ballad or instrumental minstrelry performed by a famous bard?)

Laeral's Tears: Named for the famous sorceress Laeral, these soft, brittle, colorless fancy stone crystals tend to be large and to keep a glossy, magnificent finish. This stone is the rarest and least-known of the "nine secrets" (types of gemstones that can be transformed into ioun stones by the proper spells) and has another important magical use: If prepared by a complex, secret process known to a few senior witches of Rashemen (and involving the casting of many spells), these gemstones can absorb the harm done to warriors who wear them into battle until the stones shatter, exhausted (whereupon they cease to instantly heal all wounds, leaving the warriors to fend for themselves).<sup>40</sup>

Lapis Lazuli: Lapis lazuli is an opaque, dark to sky-blue ornamental stone with gold flecks. The deeper blue the stone, the more highly it is prized. Incorrectly called lazurite in the South, lapis lazuli is usually cabochon cut and polished to show off its golden inclusions. Often the cabochons are carved into fanciful shapes such as scarabs, unicorns, or griffons. Lapis lazuli is the best gemstone to use for a *periapt of health* if one cannot get or afford a ruby, and when powdered, it becomes the principle base ingredient in the making of *potions of heroism* and *super-heroism*.

**Lumachella:** Also known as fire marble, this hardstone is a rare, dark brown fossil marble variety containing small, iridescent, opal-like snails. (Lumachella means *little snail.*) Powdered, it can be used in the spell inks or as a casting component for both water breathing and airy water spells.

**Luriyl:** A soft stone, easily worked and widely used, luriyl is also known as apatite. Found in crystals, this semiprecious stone commonly yields attractive faceted gemstones of vivid yellow, green, and yellow-green and on rare occasions comes in hues of blue and purple. Large specimens of blue or purple command high prices (commanding six times the price of the other luriyls or more) and are often used in necklaces, pendants, belts, and as insets in gowns or cloaks. Luriyls glow and vibrate slightly when touched by a magical tracer or scrutiny (any form of scrying or a *clairaudience* spell, for instance) and hence serve as warnings of unseen eavesdroppers.

**Luspeel:** Also known as magnetite, this magnetic hardstone is used in temple furnishings for effect (to awe the faithful by tugging on their ferromagnetic metal items) and also has many uses in the making of magical items. In particular, its use is considered vital by many for the proper tempering of swords that will be endowed with several enchantments.

**Lynx Eye:** Lynx eye is a specific type of labradorite (a feldspar gemstone). Labradorite as a class of stones is pale to dark gray and has patches of colored reflections. This flash is most commonly blue but can be of any shade. Green-flash labradorite is called lynx eye. Lynx eye is usually cabochon cut and fractures easily, so that most of these ornamental stones are less than an inch in diameter. Dissolved in griffon blood or the tears of a catoblepas, lynx eye gemstones form either a base for all healing or necromantically helpful potions or a valuable alternative ingredient in the making of *Keoghtom's ointment*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>Elminster: I am still trying to learn the details of this process, but I do know that a typical Laeral's tear prepared in this way can absorb 24 points of damage before crumbling forever into worthless dust. Laeral's tears are known to those from your world as beryllonite.



Malachite: Malachite is a green ornamental stone with striations of darker green. It is related to azurite, which is bluer in hue, and is usually cabochon cut to provide poorer folk with jew elry. It is (falsely) rumored to prevent falls, and to help sales is often set on rings of feather falling and the like as an ornament, Its true magical use is as a material component in priest spells of the elemental sphere and wizard spells concerned with ice, cold, fire, and heat. Powdered, it is a valued ingredient in enchantment baths for items concerned with warmth, fire resistance, and cold resistance

Malacon: This glassy brown variety of zircon is found in crystals and provides large faceted gemstones. This semiprecious stone is hard but easily chipped and so is not used in rings or the like; the large gemstones its crystals yield see most service as room adornments rather than for wear. Malacons have an unusual magical use: Those who know how to modify the castings of their spells can choose to cast them into a malacon for release later in one of three ways: when the gemstone is cracked or destroyed by being dropped or a struck; when the caster touches the gemstone and wills the spell to come forth (whereupon the gemstone vaporizes and the magic is launched under full control of the caster); or when a period of time set by the caster during the initial casting expires (whereupon the gemstone dwindles away to nothing and the magic within is launched in accordance-as to the target, specific location of the area of effect, and so on-with the directions set down during the initial casting). Malacons can thus be used to create death traps, unpleasant gifts, or turn ornately furnished rooms into defensive strongholds for the caster. Note that specialized spells are necessary to call forth a magical spell from a malacon if one is not the being who originally endowed it with a spell.

Marble: Also called calcite, marble is widely used in the Realms in sculpture, construction, and building ornamentation because of its beautiful colorations (white, black, gray, and pink, among others), its ability to take a polish, and its abundance. This hardstone is extremely heavy, but it is easily quarried in precise dimensions without fracture or wastage. It is porous but (so far as is presently known) is magically inert.

Meerschaum: Also known as sepiolite, this hardstone is very light, porous, compact, and white, and can be quarried and transported in large pieces without much equipment. It is used in the making of pipes and other small carvings. In magical processes, it may be converted (by the use of a wizard's spell known as *stretchbone*) into the missing bones for a skeleton, becoming indistinguishable from real bones. (Thus, a priest could successfully employ an *animate dead* spell to activate a skeleton that contained only one real bone, the rest being meerschaum.) There are rumors that certain wizards can cast *clairaudience* and *wizard eye* spells through distant pieces of this stone that they have previously prepared, and the usual legends about horrific necromantic uses that any bonelike substance attracts exist about it, but details of these latter matters remain either secrets or conjecture.

**Mellochrysos:** Mellochrysos is a vivid yellow variety of zircon found in large crystals. In the Realms, these are seldom cut, but rather they are polished as is and mounted in metal claw settings for rings, brooches, and knife hilts. This semiprecious stone is hard, and when left in crystal form, mellochrysos resists chipping. Its magical use comes from its reaction to a *light* spell: If a mellochrysos stone is held in an open flame within a day of a *light* spell

having been cast on the gemstone (the spell can also have just been cast on the gemstone or have been cast some time ago but still be in effect), a single flame rises from the gemstone. The gemstone fuels that flame for up to 12 hours, dwindling away very slowly—and the flame thus produced is not extinguished by wind (including magical breezes) or water (even immersion). An adventurer can therefore carry a flame while swimming underwater or employ the gemstone as a long-term light source. It is also ideal for starting fires—particularly fires designed to harm enemies or their property—because the ignited gemstone can easily be thrown into the midst of flammables or hidden away where its flame is not discovered until too late. Would-be arsonists should be aware that there is a counter to such gemstone flames: the gemstone phenalope.

**Microcline:** This feldspar ornamental stone is usually tumbled or cabochon cut. It is deep green to blue-green in hue and is sometimes referred as amazonstone. Tiny cleavage cracks within the gemstones reflect light so that a polished microcline stone visibly shimmers. Microcline crystals cleave easily, and finished stones may split if handled carelessly. Powdered and dissolved in the sap of any deciduous tree, microcline is the most versatile and abundant alternative to octopus and squid ink as a base for spell inks.

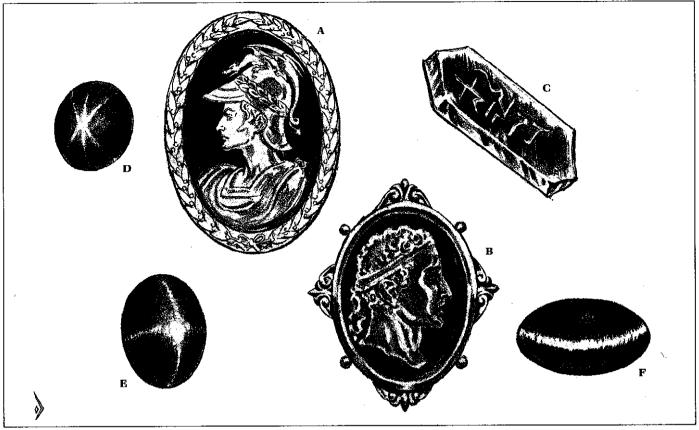
Moonbar: Moonbar crystals are pearly white, opaque gems found in desert and tropical areas of Toril. Moonbars are naturally large and rectangular with curved corners. They have a smooth, shiny surface, and so when found and washed clean, specimens are immediately suitable for use as decorative stones. Cutting a moonbar to finish the stone is only required when fragmentary moonbars are found. The largest known moonbar serves as the lid of an unknown king's casket in a barrow on the Trollmoors and is almost 7 feet long, but most of these gems are approximately 1 foot long and 4 inches wide. Powdered moonbar is used in ink formulae, potions, and spell components in magic concerned with the control, healing (or cobbling together of disparate bones), and creation of undead. It can serve in the place of important but missing ingredients relating to necromancy.

Moonstone: Moonstone is an opaque, white, semiprecious feldspar gemstone usually polished to a bluish sheen. Moonstone glows faintly with captured light for an hour or so in darkness after surrounding or nearby light sources (for example, a torch) are gone. Folk legends say (falsely) that merely seeing this stone forces a lycanthrope into his or her animal form, but magical items that control lycanthropy, affect lycanthropes, or protect against lycanthropy often use moonstones as ornamentation. To dream of moonstones, seers say, is a warning of danger. These semiprecious stones are also considered sacred to Selûne in her faith.

The only true magical uses of this gemstone are (in powdered form) as a material component in many spells involving barriers or abjurations, and in many evocation spells as a source of magical storage and sudden, thrusting redirection of that energy. With careful experimentation as to amounts, a wizard can substitute moonstones for many of the nonorganic material components called for in such spells. (This is the so-called "moonstone magic" of the sorcerer Pelathyon Hawkryn of Impiltur, whose family owned rich moonstone mines.)

Moss Agate: This pink to yellow-white agate quartz has fernlike, gray-green manganese inclusions that make it look like a white stone covered with moss. It polishes well, and is sometimes used in coffer inlays or even (when the growths form eyes, circles,





Assorted Gemstones: A, B: Cameos; C: Engraved diamond; D, E: Star gems; F: Cat's eye or tiger's eye.

or other striking or meaningful shapes) as a ring or pendant jewel. Moss agate promotes serenity and stability. Ground into a fine powder, it serves as an ingredient in medicines that bring on enforced deep sleep, and in the making of all potions, it causes substances that normally clash to mix together in stable tranquillity and so is always a safe additive, removing any possibility of an explosion or of a failed potion being poisonous.

Mykaro: Also known as smithsonite, this massive semiprecious gemstone can be yellow, straw yellow, pale brown, reddish brown, green, blue, and blue-green. It is brittle when in crystal form, but is both soft and durable when found as a crust in a rock cavity; such crusts can be 2 inches thick and cover a huge surface area. It is usually cabochon cut, particularly if it is patterned with thick bands of varying colors, but it is sometimes faceted. In any form, these gemstones can magically cure blindness if they are powdered and mixed with any nonalcoholic drinkable, the viewing eye of a wizard eye spell is then passed through the mixture, and the afflicted being then imbibes the mixture within 1 turn. The cure takes effect in 1d4+1 rounds unless eyeballs must be regenerated, which slows the remedy until it takes 1 turn.

**Mynteer:** Mynteer is the name given to phenakite, a hard, colorless, and rare gemstone. This semiprecious stone occurs in crystals, usually with inclusions. Because of this, the crystals yield only small faceted gemstones. Its magical use is as a spell ink ingredient for magics concerned with levitation, telekinesis, and

other constructs of force that move, hold, or carry things (such as unseen servant spells, Tenser's floating disc, and so on).

**Nelvine:** Nelvine is the common name of albite, a variety of white feldspar. It is soft and fragile, but easily cut with crude tools. It is found in large amounts in older rocks. Nelvine is occasionally called pigeon stone due to its white, cream, fawn, or brownishpink color. This ornamental stone exhibits a beautiful celestial blue flash of iridescence known as peristerism. It sees magical use as a spell or spell ink component in magics that disguise or change the appearance of an object or being (without altering such an item's or person's its true nature).

**Nune:** Translucent, brown crystals also known as staurolite, cross stone, or fairy stone, nunes occur in small, cross-shaped<sup>41</sup> crystals up to 1 inch across either arm in size. The crystals of this ornamental stone are commonly polished to a smooth sheen and pierced to be worn as pendants or linked to form bracelets. Nunes are prized by wizards as a powdered ingredient in the spell ink of the *dispel magic* spell and in the bath that a *wand of negation* is immersed in during its formative enchantments.

**Obsidian:** Also called natural glass or volcanic glass, obsidian is a hard, glossy, and black ornamental stone. It is volcanic in origin. While it is often chipped into arrowheads or, in larger chunks, used to make weapons, serving as a blade or club, the ornamental grade of stone is usually polished and smoothed. (Waterdhavian parcel-binders wear rings with obsidian roundels

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Elminster: In the Realms, the even-armed cross is used as an ornament and not a holy symbol, and it is commonly seen in that decorative role.



for easily snipping twine on the *insides* of their fingers.) An inferior form of obsidian (stones of decreased value) is called pitchstone and is both duller and rougher than volcanic glass; it is used for many grinding purposes. Many folk wear polished and tumbled obsidian for adornment, either as jewelry or as inlays on copper or bronze bracers and pectorals. Obsidian is one of the most favored materials for the carving of small figurines and ornamental fingerbowls.

Obsidian is too fragile for most magical uses, but can be employed as a material component in various wizard spells that emulate the famous priestly blade barrier magic. It is used in the making of the famous obsidian steed figurines and is the best known of the "nine secrets" (types of gemstones that can be transformed into ioun stones by the proper spells).

Octel: Also known as scheelite, this fancy stone occurs in soft crystals that yield sparkling faceted gemstones of pale yellow or orange hue. Larger, irregular octel crystals are sometimes mounted on silver for wear as pendants (some jewelers call them "savage fire"), used for slicing and polishing as inlays, or carved and mounted. Octels that have been touched to a *ring of free action* are called "awakened." They glow with an inner fire bright enough to illuminate their surroundings to a distance of 2 feet when taken into darkened areas. More importantly, they prevent all manner of paralyzation and hold magics from affecting anyone touching them or bearing them. These "awakened" properties are permanent, once gained.

**Onyx:** Onyx is an opaque agate of black or white hue or bands of both colors in straight lines. This semiprecious stone carves and wears well. In addition to being finished into gemstones, it is often used for figurines, statuettes, and game pieces, including the magical *onyx dog*. It is one of the "nine secrets" (types of gemstones that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells). Contact with onyx aids in safe, relatively painless child-births, but the stone is otherwise considered unlucky. 42

**Oolite:** A quartz variety which occurs in minute spherules, this ornamental stone is solid brown in color and is very similar in appearance to wave-patterned algae gemstones. Oolite spherules (or ool stones, as they are known in the Inner Sea lands) are commonly up to 1/16 of an inch in diameter and are too small to be cut. They are usually polished to bring out their color and mounted in silver jewelry, particularly tiaras or pectorals, to form patterns or the eyes of chased and sculpted figures. Powdered ool stones are a valued ingredient in the castings and spell inks of purification and neutralization magics.

**Opal:** Opaque, smooth gems, opals are pale blue with green and gold mottlings. They, are related in type to fire and black opals, but are only slightly more common. Opals are used in a number of magical items and spells, including *helms of brilliance*. Opal is almost a universal component in items concerned with the storage of spells so that they can be released later without loss of efficacy or alteration of effect; it can be used as a replace component when other components are lacking. Enchanters are warned never to employ opals in the making of items that evoke both fire and lightning or an immediate chain of small but deadly explosions occurs. When employed in a magical process, opal is best used at twilight.<sup>43</sup>

Ophealine: Ophealine is also known as axinite, glass stone, or (if violet) yanolite. Ophealine is cut in facets, and although it does not possess one of the most attractive gemstone hues, it can yield finished gemstones of considerable size that are both hard and durable. On the streets of Waterdeep, such gemstones are once known as knuckle stones because they are often sharpened and worn on rings to serve as punching weapons. When worn, ophealine prevents all manner of magical hold spells and paralyzations from taking effect and is in fact so deadening to magic that it cannot be used in any castings or spell preparations or the magic fails.

**Orbaline:** Also known as benitoite, this blue to colorless, soft precious stone shatters easily and is usually found in fragments. These can yield small faceted gemstones, but orbaline is most often used in inlays in statuettes and small ornamented boxes and coffers. Orbaline renders objects (but not living things or undead) it is in contact with resistant to fire, giving them a +4 bonus to all item saving throws vs. normal fire and a +5 bonus to all item saving throws vs. magical fire.

**Orblen:** A mineral unique to the Realms, orblen crystals yield deep golden gems of large size that can be faceted or cabochon cut. The hue of this gem has earned it the nickname "honeystone," and it is much favored in the Sword Coast North. Though found in large masses, it is quite rare. The largest known honeystone in existence, a huge hunk of rock 6 inches in diameter, is in the possession of Ring Azoun IV of Cormyr.

If any healing spell is cast into it, an orblen radiates a warmth and a golden radiance of 60-foot radius for 12 turns. Anyone in this radiance is affected as if they had imbibed a potion of vitality; beings who remain within the radiance for at least six consecutive turns also are cured of 2d6 points of damage. If any invocation/evocation school or combat sphere spell is cast into an orblen, however, it explodes in a triple-strength meteor swarm, hurling 12 2-foot-diameter, fiery spheres that cause 10d4 points of damage each outward for 20 feet in all compass directions—with the same overlapping effects as the 9th-level wizard spell of the same name.

Orl: A gem believed unique to the northern half of Faerûn, orls are found only in "blue caves" such as those at Wheloon. Orls occur in the softest rock as sharp-edged, spindle-shaped, symmetrical crystals. These crystals are of red, tawny, or orange hue, but redhued orls are the most valued. Some orl fanciers prefer to wear the unfaceted, natural crystals rather than faceted cuttings, but most orls are finished into faceted forms. Those who work with magic know orl as a potent explosive: When powdered and Mixed with powdered black opal and then introduced to any open flame in a particular way, the result is a violent explosion that does 6d8 points of damage to all within 10 feet, 4d8 to all 11 to 20 feet distant, and 2d8 to all 21 to 30 feet distant. A saving throw vs. petrification is allowed to sustain only half damage, and whether owner's save or not, items must make a successful saving throw vs. disintegration if within 10 feet or against crushing blow if 11 to 20 feet away or be destroyed. Items need not save if beyond 20 feet from the blast.

**Orprase:** The common name in the Realms for pollucite, orprase is a brittle, colorless or faintly straw-yellow gemstone of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Elminster: Onyx does indeed bring misfortune: Any being wearing or carrying any (unenchanted) amount of it suffers a -1 penalty in all saving throws and ability checks.

checks.

\*\*SElminster: In this usage of the word "twilight," 6 p.m. is meant. The explosions caused by the misuse of opals are equivalent to an initially-12d6 chain lightning spell that fires off two Melf's minute meteors in random directions whenever it strikes a new target.



medium hardness. This semiprecious stone is found as clear areas in fragments of rock and yields faceted gemstones of small to middling size. Orprase is in high demand by followers of Tymora and a small but growing number of adventurers who have learned a secret of that faith: If orprase is powdered and mixed with wine that has been consecrated to Tymora by a full priest of the goddess and the mixture (of at least 3 ounces of liquid and one gemstone) drunk, the imbiber gains a +6 bonus on his or her next saving throw or ability check (however far in the future that may be).

**Pearl:** The product of oysters and other mollusks, these precious stones are layers of aragonite formed around a bit of grit or other irritant. The resulting pearl has a rich, deep luster. Most pearls are white in the Realms, though rare and more valuable versions come in different colors. (Rainbow and black pearls are the most valuable.) Pearls of exceptional size (3 inches or morel are usually marred or otherwise less valuable, though in one extreme case a head-size, perfect pearl was enchanted and turned into a *crystal ball*. Pearls are the material components of several spells that transform acids into harmless water and of the *neutralize poison* spell, as well as being a component in many more generalized spells. Pearls are the basis for three well-known magical items (the *pearl of power, the pearl of the sirines*, and the *pearl of wisdom*), and when powdered, pearl is also valued for use in the enchantment of all magical mirrors.

**Peridot:** This translucent version of olivine is usually olive green in appearance. It is normally found in basalts and with other quartz deposits. It is a precious stone often used in abjuration spells and items which provide protection against spells and enchantments, and it forms a versatile, "good-as-the-original" spell component in such spells and items, as follows: One peridot per level of the spell to be cast or spell level of the magic to be warded away by an item must be employed (and consumed) in the casting or making.

**Phenalope:** Also known as rhodonite, this rose-red or pink semi-precious gemstone related to rhodochrosite is occasionally found in deposits large enough to yield cut slabs the size of books, which are shattered, tumbled, and then cut into attractive faceted gemstones. Phenalope prohibits all magical flames (including explosive effects such as fireballs) from igniting or remaining alight within 60 feet, and so it is included in the polished floor mosaics of many palaces and grand houses. (An Unleashed *fireball* spell would manifest only as a momentary flash of light and a puff of smoky vapors outlining the edges of where the fiery blast would have occurred.) Phenalope also inhibits or extinguishes nonmagical fires. Such fires within its radius of effect have a 6 in 8 chance of extinguishing themselves per round, unless the fire is oil-based (whereupon the chance falls to 4 in 8). Once a normal fire is out, no re-ignition can occur.

**Pipestone:** Also known as catlinite, this soft, easily carved brown-to-red hardstone has a single odd magical property: It can be substituted for wood in the casting of any wizard (not priest) spell.

**Psaedros:** Psaedros is the more common name for lepidolite, a soft lilac to mauve to pink mica used in carving. With time, this hardstone's colors fade, especially in strong sunlight. Psaedros is used in the carving of cheap coffers, statuettes, bowls, and the like. Its only known magical property is that a priest can use a hand-sized or larger total mass of it to replace both the fire and the holy water as the material components of a *wind walk* spell.

**Rainbow Obsidian:** Rainbow obsidian is an obsidian variety in which all colors save yellow are included in the black or gray base, sometimes in pronounced bands or spangles. These semiprecious

stones are usually tumbled into irregular gemstones. Like other obsidian, rainbow obsidian is hard but brittle and rarely finds use in places that receive wear. Its magical use is as a pass stone for *prismatic* magics: It can pierce the various shells of such spells without ending them or suffering harm and can bring inorganic materials that it is fastened to with it. (In other words, a rainbow-obsidian-tipped weapon could strike through a *prismatic wall*, but a living person or undead creature wearing a rainbow obsidian ring would not escape the normal effects of the prismatic magic.)

Raindrop: The common name given to cassiterite in the Realms is raindrop, which refers specifically to the flawless, colorless crystals or areas in larger, dark brown cassiterite crystals. These crystals can yield small, hard, durable faceted gemstones. The precious stones are usually fashioned into teardrop shapes polished to a velvety smoothness and used on cloaks and other garments for decoration-hence their name. Dark brown cassiterite is much less valuable and known as woodtine. Raindrop and woodtine shares the same magical property: They temporarily darken when touched to any gemstone, metal, or stone that has previously borne a deliberate enchantment (as opposed to just being touched by an unleashed spell), but no longer does. Raindrops (and woodtine stones) are more sensitive than the various magical detection and tracer spells, which tend to betray only the strongest of residual, exhausted enchantments as well as active or waiting, untriggered magics.

Ravenar: Ravenar, a glossy, black variety of tourmaline that is also called schorl, is highly valued in the northern half of Faerûn. The gem is less prized in other lands, where it is rare and carries little value. Ravenar is commonly used for inlay work on daggers, buckles, and the like. It shares the magical property of all tourmalines: If any sort of spell is cast into a ravenar (regardless of level or class), the gem "drinks" the spell and transforms it into an instant burst of *lightning bolts*: three 6d6, straight-line bolts that radiate out from the ravenar in any directions desired by the caster, consuming the ravenar in the process.

**Red Tears:** Also called *Tempus' weeping*, these teardrop-shaped, glossy crystals of vivid cherry-red, blood-crimson, or fiery orange hue are thought to be unique to the Realms. They are found in deep mines or gorge walls where old rock has been exposed. Legends say they are the tears of lovers shed for their beloveds who were slain in battle stained red by the spilled blood of the fallen. Red tears can be used as a universal substitute for all material components of healing spells (provided they do not need to be specially constructed) and as an ingredient in the inks of spells concerned with mending objects.

**Rhodochrosite:** A translucent, pink stone with a glassy luster. Rhodochrosite is usually tumbled smooth and polished, displayed in pendants and rings.

Rhodochrosite is a pink, glassy, translucent ornamental stone that is usually tumbled smooth and polished for wear in rings and pendants, though at times it is left irregular. Its magical use is as an aid in healing. If powdered and consumed in a special tea, an eyeball-sized "rosenstone" has a 20% chance of acting as a *neutralize* poison or *cure disease*. The entire batch of tea must be consumed by one being to gain the possible benefit.

**Rock Crystal:** Rock crystals are clear, transparent stones that are generally softer and less wear-resistant than higher-priced gemstones; it sees more use as adornment on furniture and crowns than as everyday jewelry. Rock crystals of particularly fine



grade—that is, lacking any impurities—are used for optics and prisms (such as eyeglasses, magnifying eyepieces, and spectacles).

In magic use, rock crystal is commonly employed as a component in spells that call for gemstone material of a particular value without specifying the gemstone type. When properly treated (by two minor but secret spells and *Veladar's vambrace*), it becomes molten, so that it can be melted together with other rock crystal in the same way that glass can be fused—and then becomes so hard as to be usable for mace heads, rock-climbing spikes, and spear or ram heads.

Rogue Stone: Rogue stones are small jewels of a shifting, rainbow-colored, iridescent hue. Their fluid shades of color appear almost liquid under normal sunlight. Rogue stones are extremely rare and always found as singleton gemstones among others in gemstone hoards or in cold regions or underwater in swamps; no more than one is ever found in one place at one time. No one has as yet managed to determine in what sort of rock they are most likely to be found. Rogue stones cleave into natural facets, and it is these surfaces that are iridescent. Some primitive human tribes believe rogue stones to be the sentient essences of dragons or mighty heroes, but sages hold this view to be folk nonsense. Rogue stones are (correctly) thought to increase the chance of magic going wild in their vicinity and are used for the fabled *gemjump* spell. 44

Rosaline: Also known as unionite, thulite, or pink zoisite, this ornamental stone is found in either in massive, soft quantities about the size of a human head or in small, harder crystals displaying vivid trichroism: the exhibition of three different colors when viewed from three different angles. The soft variety is cut in 1-pound blocks for trading and later cabochon cut for final sale. The trichroic type, which most often displays either purple, blue, and red or purple, green, and red hues, is cut into facets. Large trichroic crystals have brought higher prices when fashions have turned to brooches and rings adorned with rosaline. (Treat the trichroism variety as a higher value stone.) Certain of the threecolored crystals have a magical use: If borne by a being who comes into contact with any prismatic spell, they vanish, but each crystal consumed also negates one layer of the prismatic magic (outermost layer first, and so on). The difficulty is that most rosaline crystals do not have the right nature (color mix) to work in such situations, and identifying the rare "correct" stones is a deadly process that consumes the stone while testing it.

**Ruby:** This rather common (in Faerûn) clear to deep crimson red corundum stone is highly valued because of its sparkling shine and vivid hues. From least value to greatest, it can be found as a clear stone, crimson, or deep crimson. Of about every hundred rubies, one has a white star at its heart and is known as a star ruby. Folklore generally holds rubies to be lucky objects.

Spellcasters know that all items concerned with improving personal fortune in specific instances (that is, anything that augments ability checks, saving throws, or system shock/resurrection survival rolls) can be made with a +25% probability of the enchantment succeeding if one ruby per item function is powdered and used in the enchantment process. (If an item has multiple func-

tions but only one ruby is used, its boon is a +10% bonus.) Ruby dust has a myriad of magical uses, including a key role as an ingredient in spell inks in spells of the elemental and sun spheres or the abjuration, alteration, and evocation schools. It is particularly effective in such uses when employed at "the time of summer sunset." <sup>45</sup> Rubies are essential features of a *helm of brilliance* and are the preferred gemstones in any item concerned with healing. Correctly used, they can ward off lightnings and earthquakes (both natural and magical), and in very rare instances have been found to contain creatures hitherto unknown in Faerûn—creatures that live and grow rapidly once the gemstone is shattered with enough care to release but not harm them.

**Rusteen:** Also known as microlite, this dark reddish brown to pale brown precious stone is much prized for its durability. It is used to adorn swords, armor, and even shields. Its magical use is as a spell component of *wall of force* and *forcecage* magics.

Saganite: Saganite is a variety of chalcedony with numerous straight, needlelike inclusions of a different color. It is usually ivory or yellow in color with brown or greenish-black needles, and the needles often radiate, starlike, from a common center. Saganite occurs in large deposits and is often sold in fist-sized or larger chunks. In Amn, one may hear two tradespeople discussing the sale price of "a fist of saganite." This ornamental stone is sometimes called needle stone, love stone, or hairstone. Saganite added to the material components of all spells that involve explosions or outbursts of flame as their direct spell effects augments the usual damage dealt by the spell by an additional 1 point of damage per die.

Samarskite: Samarskite is a hard and heavy, velvet-black rareearth mineral with a metallic luster. These semiprecious stones are cabochon cut for use as mourning gemstones or in black ceremonial finery in the Realms. In either use it has the same magical function: The presence of samarskite anywhere on a being diminishes all damage done to that being by any undead attack by 1 point of damage per attack or, if an attack causes multiple dice of damage, per die of damage.

Sanidine: A feldspar gemstone that is pale tan to straw yellow in color, sanidine is found on the surface of gravel screes or sand dunes. This ornamental stone is cut into faceted gemstones of a size to be set in finger rings or smaller and is a favorite of nomadic desert peoples, such as the Bedine. If present in solid form as large as the caster's thumb (or greater), it can serve successfully as the sole spell component for all spells involving either water or purification (provided a component need not be specially constructed).

**Sapphire:** Sapphire is a brilliant blue, translucent corundum mineral. Sapphires vary from a clear, pale blue to a radiant azure. Sapphires augment enchantments. and so are widely used in the making of magical swords and other magical items, especially those related to magical prowess, the mind, and the element of air. An important exception to this boosting is magic that causes fear, anger, despair, or insanity: The wearer of a sapphire is partially protected against such effects. In magical processes, sapphires are best used at midmorn. 46

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>Elminster: Increase all chances of magic going wild, going wrong, or magic-related saving throws failing by 1 point within 20 feet of any rogue stone; if more than one stone is carried together, such chances are cumulative. The gemjump spell is detailed in the Pages From the Mages accessory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Elminster: To us, about 5 p.m. increase chances of efficacy by a +2 bonus or 25% when powdered ruby is employed at such times.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Elminster: When an item is set with a whole, large sapphire of not less than 5,000 gp value and bathed in a mixture containing powdered sapphire during its enchantment, there is a 55% chance that a magical bonus is augmented by 1; that is, a +1 sword will become a +2 sword. This can be done either when an item is created or to improve an existing one using a special process. As a spell component, sapphires make spells last for the longest possible time and deal the maximum damage in their first round of doing harm. Against magic or psionics that affect emotions or cloud the mind (including charms, feeblemind and geas spells, and insanity-causing effects), sapphires give beings wearing or bearing them a +2 bonus to all saving throws or allow a normal saving throw when none is ordinarily allowed.

When dealing with sapphires, "midmorn" means a half hour centered on 10 a.m.



Sarbossa: This ornamental stone bears a wide variety of alternate names: thomsonite, lintonite, comptonite, ozakite, eye stone, or fire rock. It is found in small nodules of up to 1 inch in diameter in small cavities in rocks formed during volcanic eruptions. Sarbossa is fibrous and therefore is both tough and soft. It is basically grayishgreen in hue but is sometimes beautifully colored with rings of pink, red, white, and green. When used as a component in spells that involve transformations of the shape of a spell victim or recipient, any amount of sarbossa adds 1d2 rounds to the spell duration.

**Sardonyx:** Sardonyx is a form of onyx with alternating bands of carnelian in a red and white pattern. This semiprecious stone is used in spells and in creating magical items which affect Wisdom. It has the same magical uses and properties as the jewels known as kings' tears and is also one of the "nine secrets" (gemstones that can be transformed into *ioun stones* by the proper spells). Sardonyx gemstones sometimes guard against *magic missile* damage, but this is not a reliable protection.<sup>47</sup>

**Satin Spar:** Also known as feather gypsum, this extremely soft but sparkling and easily polished ornamental stone is too fragile for wear. It is white, pink, pale orange, or pale brown in hue. It can readily be dyed to any hue at the cost of its sparkle and is often used in gemstone carvings. It has the sole magical property of partially negating *magic missiles*: Any such *missile* vaporizes a satin spar stone worn, carried, or touched by its target being, but deals only half damage to that being.

Scapra: This name is given to the finest scapolite stones: pale to medium yellow fancy stones that are soft and easy to cut into facets, but also too soft for use in rings or on clothing. Scapras have a very specific magical property: When added to the material components of a guards and wards spell (and consumed in its casting), they permit the addition of either another one of the five possible "additional magical effects" (either a duplicate of one chosen by the caster or another effect) or a phantasmal force (usually an illusion of a guard, monster, glowing eyes, or a menacing wizard is chosen). One addition per gemstone can be made to the warded area, with a limitation of another five additional effects.

Serpentine: Serpentine refers to a wide variety of related minerals known more precisely as williamsite, ricolite, verde antique, picrolite, taxoite, bowenite, or poor man's jade. Those varieties used extensively for carving are traded as serpentine stone. The most common usage of serpentine as a semiprecious stone in the Realms refers to the finest translucent, vivid, pure green williamsite. This intensely green stone is cut into faceted gemstones or cabochons. Serpentine of this type is most widely used in cabochon form and is set into ornamented weaponry, armor, and harnesses, rings, and courtly jewelry of all types.

This type of serpentine confers magical protection equal to that afforded by a priestly *resist fire* or *resist cold* spell. Each stone functions once against cold and once against fire, automatically and regardless of the bearer's wishes, and then crumble into useless, ashen dust. If a being wears multiple serpentines, only one acts to protect in a trigger situation, not all of them.

**Serpentine Stone:** Serpentine ranges in use from being cut into fine faceted gemstones to—in less valued forms such as this dark green hardstone variety—being carved into ornamental screens, furniture inlays, and such items as the *serpentine owl*. Also known as verde antique, this carving hardstone is really a group of very similar

stones. Three of them share the same property as the gemstone known as serpentine: They afford the same magical protection as a priestly *resist fire* or *resist cold* spell. Each piece of the right sort of serpentine stone functions once against cold and once against fire, automatically and regardless of the bearer's wishes, and then crumble into useless, ashen dust. If a being carries, is in contact with, or wears multiple serpentine stones, only one act to protect in a trigger situation, not all of them. Unfortunately, only jewelers, expert miners (such as most dwarves), and wizards and priests experienced in working with this particular material can tell the right serpentine stone from the wrong (magically inert) sort.

Shandon: Also known as natrolite, this fancy stone occurs in slender, colorless crystals that yield tiny faceted gemstones used by skilled clothiers to adorn veils and robes with ornamentations to impart the effect of beads of water glistening on the material. Such gemstones fetch their true value only when sold to gemcutters and others familiar with them; they are too small and colorless to impress the eye of the uninitiated. When an ironguard spell (which renders the subject's body immune to all metal weapons, which move freely through the body as if it were not there) is cast on a single shandon stone that has already been affixed to a garment on which there are at least six other shandons, the ironguard effect becomes a permanent effect of the garment, protecting whoever wears it. Note that the effect does not extend to body areas not covered by the specific garment and that a poisoned metal weapon still introduces its poison into the body that the metal blade cannot harm. (The garment is also invisible to metallic items, which do not catch on it.) If the enspelled shandon is ever crushed, shattered, or becomes separated from the garment, the magical effect is ended.

**Sharpstone:** Sharpstone is another name for novaculite, a quartz variety that occurs in various colors. Commonly quarried as a gritty sharpening stone, it is sometimes fine enough for gemstone use (as an ornamental stone) when a high-grade chunk is cabochon cut. It is difficult to polish to a high luster since it is both hard and dense, but it can yield large stones. It has the magical property of increasing the radius of spell effects by 10 feet at the cost of 1 die of damage (or, if a spell does not do direct physical damage, of 1 round of spell duration). Any amount of sharpstone consumed in a casting has this effect; large amounts or multiple stones cannot increase its efficacy.

Sheen: Sheen is a variety of obsidian that has many minute, spangly inclusions ranging in color from mahogany to russet to silver and gold. The most valuable of these, gold sheen, is a semi-precious stone, but most forms of sheen are merely ornamental stones. Sheen is usually tumbled if it is large in size and attractive or cabochon cut if smaller or possessed of flaws that a skillful cutting could eliminate; it can be polished to a glossy, gleaming finish. Sheen added to any type of spell that creates a radiance allows the caster to precisely control the hue of the spell effect. When added to invisibility magics, it increases the duration of such spells by 1d3 rounds.

**Shou Lung Amethyst:** Shou Lung amethyst is a corundum mineral closer in compositions to ruby and sapphire than it is to the Faerûnian amethyst. Shou Lung amethyst takes its name from its deep purple hue. This gem is said to come from the lands of Kara-Tur in the uttermost East, where its is used to protect the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Elminster: Whenever a magic missile strikes a creature wearing or carrying one or more sardonyx gems, there is a 2 in 6 chance that 1 point of damage (per missile, not per spell) is drawn off by the gem, rather than being suffered by the creature. Sardonyx gems are never harmed by this energy and have no load limit of energy they can take in.



lives of noblemen. It is reputed to have puissant magical powers—so far unknown even to the most persistent wizards of Faerûn.

Shou Lung Emerald: A much harder and more lustrous variation of the western (Faerûnian) emerald, the Shou Lung emerald is called the bureaucrat's stone in the fabled lands of Kara-Tur. Legend says that only three of these jewels exist, but since at least a dozen caches of them are scattered throughout the west, this statement is discounted as myth. Regardless, the bright green gemstone is highly valued. This eastern stone is little seen in Faerûn, and little is known of it, though its pleasing appearance makes it highly valued.

Shou Lung Topaz: A fiery yellow corundum mineral, Shou Lung topaz is only imported to the western Realms by travelers from Shou Lung and the other mysterious nations of the East. This gem is often used in magical items associated with felines; its color reminds some observers of the deep yellow of some of cats' eyes. It is rumored to have many magical properties so far unknown to Faerûnian wizards.

Silkstone: A quartz ornamental stone, silkstone is a special, fibrous variety of tiger eye which has a faint sparkle. It is found in many colors, yellow being the most abundant, and can be cabochon cut, tumbled, or engraved to make seals for nobles and merchants. To priests and mages, powdered silkstone is an reliable substitute component in the casting of spells, and the making of the inks to write them, concerned with life-energy draining and restoration. Silkstone is also sometimes worn around the neck to ward off spirits. This is more folk tale than fact, but it is true that the undead creatures known as shadows always hesitate for 1 round when they confront a being wearing silkstone. (This hesitation ends abruptly if the silkstone wearer attacks them, but does allow the gemstone wearer to flee untouched, to get out a weapon or item of gear from a backpack or other awkward storage spot, or to launch the first attack.)

**Sinhalite:** A rare stone, sinhalite is found only in streambed gravel or the deposits left by vanished streams as pale strawyellow to yellow-brown water-worn pebbles. This fancy stone yields cabochon gemstones up to 1 inch in diameter known as sinhalas. Sinhalite has only one magical property: No sort of magical darkness can form or persist within 20 feet of a sinhala.

**Skydrop:** The common name given in the Realms to clear or lightly colored tektite material, especially fragments of glass of celestial (meteoritic) origin found in the vast shifting sands of Anauroch and other deserts. Such semiprecious stones are usually buffed and polished to sparkling clarity and fixed in claw mounts to be worn as pendants or teardrop earrings. They render any beings touching, carrying, or wearing them immune to petrification.

**Smoky Quartz:** Also called cairngorm or moorland topaz, smoky quartz ranges from a gritty yellow to brown or black in color. As a black gemstone, it is called morion and used by necromancers. This semiprecious stone is usually brilliant cut into faceted gemstones. Often found in quite large masses, it is much used as a weapon adornment, but only its morion form sees magical use as a spell ink ingredient and spell component in all necromantic and necromancy magics, bone tinctures, and bone-strengthening baths, especially when bony material is to be incorporated into a permanent magical item. <sup>48</sup>

Snowflake Obsidian: Snowflake obsidian is a brittle, weak, volcanic, black glass with grayish, flowerlike inclusions that resemble snowflakes if the stone is properly cut. This ornamental stone is found in large deposits and either tumbled to gemstone form for sale or sold as quarried in large, irregular chunks (trade blocks) of up to 25 pounds. It is sometimes carved into small figurines. If worn or carried on an outer surface of a being or item, a thumbnail-sized or larger piece of snowflake obsidian reduces any damage done by a dragon breath weapon attack by 1d4 points per die, to a minimum of 1 point per die. The stone is consumed in doing so and has no effects on transformations or incidental effects of the breath weapon attack.

**Soapstone:** Soapstone (also known as steatite), which comes in varied hues from white to green and is often dyed other colors, can be intricately carved and quickly brought to a warm, glossy finish. Too brittle and soft for extremely fine and delicate carving, this hardstone type of talc is easily worked by unskilled hands. It is reputed to have magical properties related to fire and the capture of warmth; but these remain (as yet) a mystery to my investigations.

**Sphene:** Sphene is a soft, brittle precious stone easily worked by unskilled cutters (like scapra). It comes in various yellow to green shades, but a fine emerald green is the most prized hue. Sphene crystals can be cut into beautiful, sparkling, faceted gemstones of small and medium size. It has the little-known magical property of warding off lightnings (including those borne of spells), causing saving throws against such effects to be a made at a +4 bonus and all damage rolls from lightning to be made at a penalty of -1 point per die.

**Spinel:** A translucent, durable precious stone found in red (from the hot deserts of the South), blue (from lands east of Faerûn, and green (from the jungles of Chult and Mhair) hues. Green spinels are the rarest sort. Spinels that are specially crushed and ingested enable any spellcasting being to instantly recall the last spell it cast.

**Spodumene:** A hard and quite durable stone, spodumene is also known as kunzite in its pink-to-purple varieties and hiddenite when emerald green in hue. This semiprecious stone is readily cleaved and can often be cut into faceted gemstones of great size. The kunzite variety suffers from a strange phenomenon: Its color fades with the passage of time to a pale shadow of its former self. Such variants of kunzite are called ghost stone. Spodumene has the magical property of opening wizard-lock doors and items upon contact, provided it is sprinkled with at least three drops of holy water. (The water is consumed at each functioning, but the gemstone is not.)

Star Diopside: Star diopside is the most prized form of a hard, durable mineral that is rarely found in attractive colors. This mineral is usually too dark green in color for great beauty, but mountain- and streambed-pebble crystals of pale to medium green hue produce attractive semiprecious stones. (See dioptase above.) A few mineral specimens of darker green appear to radiate four- or six-rayed stars when cut, and these fancy stones are rated at higher values for gemstone variation under this classification rather than that of dioptase. These starred stones are valued in both jewelry use and for mounting in palace, temple, and court-room entryways, because they have the sole magical property of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Elminster: It should be noted that much of what is called "cairngorm" in our world is heat-colored glass and not this gemstone at all.

Morion in the Realms has the ability to make bone as hard as steel—and to render it immune to hostile necromancies, so that a hostile priest cannot animate one's own scepter, primarily fashioned of bone, in a hostile fashion or disrupt its magical functioning by other necromantic spells.



winking and flashing vigorously when any sort of active illusion/phantasm magic (in other words, a magically disguised person) passes within 10 feet of them.

Star Metal: Star metal is another name for metallic meteorites. These hardstones are extremely rare and usually no larger than a human's thumb in size, though larger examples the size of an ogre's head or bigger have been found. Smiths have mastered the technique of forging star metal by adding small amounts of alloys of more common metals to make weapons of great strength and durability, ideal for taking enchantments. Combined with alloys such as steel, star metal adds to the sharpness and flexible temper of bladed weapons and is reputed to heighten the strength and duration of all enchantments laid upon blades of which it is a part (though I have not yet been able to learn anything definite about such matters). Because of this, star metal ore is valued in the thousands of gold pieces when obtained in large enough chunks to be worked. Star metal is classified as a hardstone because its innate value lies primarily in its transformed state, after it is melted and forged into weapons or armor. In addition to being so transformed, tiny pieces of star metal are sometimes sliced and polished for inlay work.

Star Rose Quartz: This smoky, rose quartz is asteriated; that is, when cut, it reflects or transmits light in a starlike pattern. Aside from its jewelry uses as a centerpiece in pectorals and earrings worn by mature matrons and courtiers of "old family" standing, this semiprecious stone serves as an alternative spell component in all wizard spells of the abjuration school and all priest spells of the protection sphere that have or can use components (provided the components need not be specially constructed). When worn or carried as a stone, star rose quartz has a 14% chance of magically redirecting (turning) a spell directed at its bearer at some other target or area.

**Star Ruby:** A variation of the ruby (red corundum), this jewel is less translucent than a normal ruby and has a white star highlighted at its center. Such stars are caused by the optical properties of the mineral crystal. They most commonly have six points, though other even-numbered combinations are possible. Of every hundred rubies, one is a star.

This sort of stone shares the properties of the ruby, but it is the epitome of healing: If a wraithform spell is cast on a star ruby that has already received a knock spell, the gemstone becomes a thick, heavy red vapor. If this is inhaled by a mammalian being, it combines the effects of an elixir of health, a regeneration spell, and a heal spell. It cannot bring the dead back to life, but can instantly restore a being brought back to life by a raise dead or resurrection spell to full, energetic health and vitality.

**Star Sapphire:** An exceedingly valuable variation of the sapphire (blue or black corundum), this jewel is less translucent than a normal sapphire and has a white star of four or more points highlighted at its center. Such stars, caused by the optical properties of the mineral, always have an even number of points—most commonly six. For every thousand sapphires found, one is a star.

Star sapphires are used in producing and ornamenting devices that offer protection against hostile magic. A star sapphire may be used as the material component of a minor globe of invulnerability or globe of invulnerability spell, and in each case increases the level of spells warded off by the barrier by one. If used as a material component in an antimagic shell spell (an enchantment normally requiring no material component), a star sapphire increases the

duration of that spell by 14 turns, and maintains it while the caster slumbers (if need be). This gemstone has many other uses in the fashioning of protective items—far too many to even list here.

**Sulabra:** The name by which argillite is more commonly known is sulabra. This hardstone is a soft, gray mineral halfway between slate and shale in its properties. It cleaves easily in planes and is of relative little value compared to other hardstones due to its hue and softness. It is widely used for inexpensive carvings, ornamental lintels, and the like. It is (so far as is known) magically inert.

Sunstone: Sunstone is a feldspar ornamental stone closely related to moonstone. It is more properly known as oligoclase. Sunstone can be colorless or faintly greenish and of facet grade, but most common by far is its softer variety suitable only for being cut cabochon. The cutting of a cabochon rarely yields a gemstone larger than 3/4-inch diameter. Such gemstones have bright red or orange spangles (minute crystals) suspended in parallel in a nearly colorless background, giving the whole a rich golden or reddish brown color. Sunstones are prized for their ability to store light-related and energy-discharge magics of all sorts for later release by touching the stone and speaking the last word of the spell incantation, whereupon the magic erupts out of the stone at a target chosen by the will of its activator or at a random target (depending on how the spell was cast and if the activator concentrated on a target or not). This touch and utterance need not be made by the spell's original caster or even by a spellcaster at all. Such an activation destroys the gemstone.

**Tabasheer:** This semiprecious stone is an opal-like silica found in the joints of certain types of bamboo. Tabasheers are irregular in shape and are usually tumbled and buffed to a velvet-smooth finish and worn as tiny stones in rings or fringe stones on jeweled pectorals or shawls. Most common in the South, tabasheer sees use as a trading currency there and when southern traders deal with barbarian tribes. It has the magical property of infusing beings with temporary extra hit points. If a tabasheer is crushed and a *cure light wounds* spell cast on the powder while it is on the tongue of (or in an open wound on the body of) a being, the being gains 3d6 hit points for 24 hours (or less, for each one lost is gone for good). Any damage suffered by an augmented being is taken from these phantom hit points first, but gaining them does not increase a being's level, spell abilities, saving throws, or anything else.

Tchazar: Also known as aragonite, this soft, fragile straw-yellow gemstone is found in elongated, prism-shaped crystals. This semiprecious stone requires skilled cutting to yield faceted gemstones, and cabochon-cut tchazar is much less valuable than such faceted gemstones. (Tchazar gemstones revalued as ornamental are cabochon cut.) Any cut of tchazar has the same curious magical property: It clouds scrying magics from seeing anything but a blur within 2 feet of it. For this reason, coffers, collars, reading desks, locks, keys, and wrist bracers are often adorned with tchazars. If a tchazar shatters, its magical power is instantly lost.

**Tempskya:** This hardstone is a form of quartz also known as petrified wood. The silicified wood varies widely in hue from black or white through red, yellow, tawny, brown, and sometimes pink. Like the original wood, pieces of tempskya vary in size from twigs to huge logs. Some examples of tempskya are difficult to polish because of differences in hardness across their surfaces, and most samples have fractures and inclusions of clear quartz, opal, or chalcedony. Tempskya of pretty grain and hue is sometimes cabo-



chon cut and polished for personal ornamentation, but this hardstone is most often is cut into flat slabs, polished, and fitted for inlay work. Tempskya is known to be useful to wizards as an alternative material component in all spells concerned with petrification and enchantments that create magical items concerned with petrification.

**Thuparlial:** Also called prehnite, this hard, tough, translucent volcanic ornamental stone can be found in various hues from rich green through pale greenish-yellow and yellow to brown. It is abundant in hardened lavas as a crust lining gas cavities in the rock, but only rarely is this crust thick enough or colorful enough to be cut into gemstones. When powdered, it is a valued ingredient in the spell ink formulae and casting components of *pyrotechnics* and *heat metal* spells—and Thayan mages who have access to plentiful thuparlials continually experiment with the use of this gemstone as a replacement components for various fiery and heat-related spells (so far without any reported success).

Tiger Eye Agate: Tiger eye agate is a golden agate with dark brown striping; the coloration and striping give the ornamental stone its name. Legends state that unenchanted tiger eyes are useful in repelling spirits and undead creatures. This has never been proven to be true, but the buying public expects potions of undead control, the inks used to mark caskets and tombs to prevent their dead kin rising in undeath, and other items having to do with repelling or controlling the undead to employ powdered tiger eye agate, so many alchemists shrug and include it.

**Tomb Jade:** This rare, highly prized gem is jade that has turned red or brown through being buried for great lengths of time. Buried jade can also be turned green if bronze objects are buried near it; jade of such hue is no more valuable than normal jade. Tomb jade can be powdered and used as an ingredient in *potions of undead control* or brandished by a priest who has failed in an earlier turning attempt—it allows a second attempt at a +1 bonus.

**Topaz:** Sometimes called the *jewel of light* because it prolongs *faerie fire* spells cast upon it so that they last 6d4 *days*, the topaz is a very hard, durable, golden, translucent precious stone found in large crystals in granite. Usually yellow or brown, it can be made pink or a bright light blue if exposed to great temperatures, such as by thrusting it into forge fires. Topazes are often mounted on protective magical items because the stone ensures that the item itself will be immune to breakage or a change in state (disintegration, petrification, melting or corrosion due to acid or fire, and so on).

A topaz is the best jewel to use in the making of a *gem of brightness* because the enchantments used in the making of that item render it as hard as mithral. A topaz also has the natural property of storing any healing spell cast upon it without preparation; the spell is released by placing the gemstone into an open wound, where it melts away, or by powdering it and drinking it in milk or wine from a mithral goblet. (The container cannot be of any other metal or the draft is useless and the magic lost; topaz that stores healing magic has a distinctive cold, sour taste.)

**Tourmaline:** Long-crystalled tourmaline in its multicolored varieties is considered a fancy stone and is abundant throughout Faerûn. The black variations are called ravenar; they are valued more highly and considered gems. Tourmaline hues vary from green to blue, brown, or red, all in pale shades. Often a tourma-

line crystal may display multiple hues, and in this case it is classified as rainbow tourmaline and is more valuable than purely monotonal stones. All shades of tourmaline share the same magical property: If any sort of spell, regardless of level or class, is cast into a tourmaline, the tourmaline "drinks" the spell and transforms it into an instant burst of *lightning bolts*: three 6d6-hp damage straight-line bolts that radiate out from the stone in any directions desired by the caster, consuming the tourmaline in the process.

Tremair: Also known as hexagonite (a pink variety of tremolite), tremair is found in small, translucent, pink crystals that yield even smaller faceted gemstones. Sometimes sewn onto debutantes' gowns in Chessenta, Sembia, and Waterdeep to signal the unmarried availability of the wearer, these fancy stones do just what legends say they do: make anyone who wears them next to their skin immune to all magical curses.

**Turquoise:** This opaque, aqua-blue ornamental stone most often has darker blue mottlings; elves especially prize specimens that lack such mottlings for use in sky-related spells. Turquoise gleams slightly when gold is nearby, and for this reason is thought to bring prosperity. It is also said to bring good luck; horsemen often place a sliver of this stone in a horse's harness to bring good luck and protect the horse from a misstep or trail hazards such as venomous pests. Mages use turquoises in the enchantment baths of items concerned with flight—and when so used, this stone is best worked in the foredawn.

Turritella: Turritella is a dark brown agate (quartz) hardstone that consists of many small, silicified shells (all spiral-shaped and less than an inch long). This cheap alternative to marble is quarried in slabs and used for facings, inlay-work, and floorings, just as marble is. Many sages speculate that it should have a magical use, but (so far as is presently known) no one has yet discovered just what that use may be.

**Ulvaen:** Also known as amblygonite, this soft, but shatter-resistant, pale to rich yellow fancy stone can readily be worked by the unskilled into large cabochons or faceted gemstones and so is very popular for jewelry. If touched to an open wound (or placed on the tongue, in the case of internal injuries), an ulvaen stone melts away in 1d4+1 rounds, regenerating the human, demihuman, or humanoid body it is contact with, in the following order: stop bleeding, restore organs, close wounds, regain lost hit points.

For the efficacy of a particular ulvaen stone, roll 1d4. On a result of 1, the victim gains is healed of 2d4 points of damage, and the stone's power ends. On any other result, bleeding stops; roll 1d4 again. On a result of 1, 1d6+1 points of damage are healed, and the stone's power ends. Any other result means that any damaged organs are healed (as well as the cessation of bleeding); roll 1d4 again. A result of 1 heals 1d4+1 points of damage and ends the work of the stone, but any other result means that all wounds are closed (in addition to ending all bleeding and restoring organs), and 1d4 must be rolled again. A result of 1 means the healed being is healed of 1 point of damage to end the stone's work, but any other result means the stone heals 1d10 points of damage.

Variscite: Also known as lucinite and peganite, this deep to pale yellowish-green, translucent ornamental stone is found in nodules or in rock seams. It is cut cabochon, and on rare occasions displays gray and yellow bands and eyes (rings) when so cut.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Elminster: Turquoises grant stability in flight (despite wind disturbances) in the powers of items they are used in the enchanting of. In this context, "foredawn" means a half-hour period centered on 5 a.m.





More Assorted Gemstones: A: Baroque pearl; B: Round pearls; C, D: Coral; E, F: Carved jade: G: Carved Blue John; H: Carved serpentine; I: Jet; J: Amber; K: Carved ivory.

Variscite is poisonous to lycanthropes. If mounted on an arrowtip or blade, it triples the damage done by that weapon on its first strike (only) against a particular lycanthrope. (Thereafter, that individual lycanthrope suffers no further damage from variscite contact for one full day.) If worn as a gemstone, variscite can have a one-time damaging effect of 1d6+4 points only if pressed into an open wound on a lycanthrope or brought into contact with one's tongue; it must reach the bloodstream to do harm.

Violine: A purple variety of volcanic gemstone found in patches mixed with other minerals, violine is cabochon cut or faceted into a baguette shape. Deposits of this ornamental stone occasionally yield gemstones of unusual size (as big as a human fist, for example). Upon contact with a being afflicted with mummy rot, violine in any amount is consumed, but it negates the mummy rot. If a mummy is brought into contact with any amount of violine, it suffers 4d4 points of damage. If this destroys it, the mummy dust that results is ineffective for magical uses.

Water Opal: Water opal is a clear, translucent variety of opal with only a play of color to it, like oil on a clear puddle. Transparent opals without a play of color are known as hyalite. They are considered inferior and are those variations of the gemstone which are nigh worthless. Water opals are rare and valuable gems used as ornaments around mirrors and windows or in the crafting of magical scrying devices (such as *crystal balls*). They have an additional property: If powdered and mixed with holy

water, an *elixir of health* is created without any enchantments being necessary.

Waterstar: Also known as achroite or colorless tourmaline, waterstar is a rare, colorless, and sparkling stone. The only material of this stone valued for gemstone use (as a fancy stone) is that entirely free of flaws and inclusions. Crystals of this flawless type yield quite large faceted gemstones. Waterstar shares the magical property of all true tourmalines: If any sort of spell, regardless of level or class, is cast into a waterstar, the waterstar "drinks" the spell and transforms it into an instant burst of *lightning bolts*: three 6d6-hp damage straight-line bolts that radiate out from the stone in any directions desired by the caster, consuming the waterstar in the process.

Webstone: The ornamental stone known commonly as webstone is more properly called spiderweb obsidian. Webstone is an obsidian variety in which small pieces of the stone have been cemented together by heat and pressure in an irregular mass; the joints show as irregular, weblike lines. It is usually black with whitish join lines, but webstone of brown, reddish brown, and rust-red hues with lighter webbing has been found. When carried in direct flesh-to-stone contact by humans or demihumans (certain jewelers make armpit bands of soft-tumbled webstones strung so as to be worn around a shoulder), webstones protect their wearers from all harmful gaseous and airborne particulate effects, from smoke to poisonous gases to airborne fungi spores. Each contact with such things involuntarily and automatically



causes a webstone to partially vaporize at an irregular, variable rate until nothing is left. The protection a webstone confers also varies wildly and randomly from specimen to specimen—from complete to nothing—which keeps the value of webstone low.

Witherite: Witherite commonly occurs in large, fibrous deposits containing translucent areas large enough to yield faceted, pale yellow to whitish gemstones. More rarely, this semi-precious stone is found in clusters of translucent yellowish crystals that are also faceted when they are cut into gemstones. Witherites only magical property is that, when set in a special electrum setting and worn in direct, flesh-to-stone contact by a human or demihuman, it provides immunity to withering magics or psionic abilities and the reversed, damaging form of necromantic sphere priest spells.

Wonderstone: Wonderstone is a rhyolite variety displaying bands of red, brown, tan, or purple. This ornamental stone occurs in large deposits and can be cut into blocks of almost a cubic foot in size when quarried. It is typically cabochon when finished and takes a fair to good polish. It has the sole magical property of glowing with an eerie blue-green or deep royal blue radiance for 5d4 rounds after coming into direct contact with a spell effect, magical item, or any being or item that bears an active enchantment. It sees some use at entryways as a magic detector, but it is more often employed in inlay work in the making of furniture for the well-to-do to provide impressive mood lighting for feasts and revels.

Woodtine: The name of this stone is a corruption of the odd term "wood tin," applied colloquially here to a variety of cassiterite. This brownish, fibrous ornamental stone is found in large nodules and is cabochon cut as a gemstone. It has the strange property of temporarily darkening when touched to any gemstone, metal, or stone that has previously borne a deliberate enchantment but no longer does (as opposed to just being touched by an unleashed spell). It is more sensitive than the various magical detection and tracer spells, which tend to betray only the strongest of residual, exhausted enchantments as well as active or waiting, untriggered magics.

**Xylopal:** Also known as lithoxyle or opalized wood, this hardstone is moderately prized and is usually fashioned into bookends, polished for collectors, and formed into intricate carvings or statuettes. Fine-quality examples of xylopal are often used for table inlays and personal adornment. It must be well-polished to show its full beauty. For some unknown reason, a hand-sized piece (or collection of fragments) of xylopal can be used as an alternative material component to replace both the lodestone and the iron filings in the casting of the 7th-level wizard spell *reverse gravity*.

Zarbrina: Also known as cerussite, this very soft, leadlike, colorless mineral is easily cut into brilliant faceted gemstones. This ornamental stone is usually mounted in ceremonial, little-used jewelry or set in small metal claw mounts into the sleeves or collars of gowns because of its softness and fragility. Zarbrinas feel soapy to the touch and thus can be worn on intimate garments or sewn onto bed linens without doing harm. Powdered zarbrina is an acceptable alternative ingredient in spell inks for magics concerned with illusions.

**Zendalure:** A mottled blue-white gem presently unknown outside of Faerûn, zendalure is found as large, egg-shaped crystals 2 to 6 inches in diameter in solidified lava flows. Polished to a glassy finish, zendalures are used for inlay work and as tiny cabochons in rings, earrings, and pendants. When powdered and mixed with

water, zendalure creates "seasonsteal," a glycerinelike perfect preservative capable of keeping mammalian, reptilian, or avian parts completely undecayed and unaltered indefinitely, so long as the remains in question are completely immersed in the season-steal and kept out of direct sunlight. Things stored in this way can be considered fresh as far as healing magics and other magical processes are concerned.

**Ziose:** Ziose is the name given by sages to a particular facet-grade variety of ziosite. This rare mineral yields cut stones that flash three vivid hues depending on how the light catches them or in what direction they are viewed: purple, blue, and red or purple, green, and red. Very large, human head-sized specimens of this fancy stone are sometimes found, and they are prized for use in pendants by giants.

One ziose is suspended over a well of glowing enchanted waters in a temple of Mystra in Halruaa as a guardian: Ziose stones of any size have the potent magical property of being able to unleash six *magic missile* pulses (each dealing 1d4 + 1 points damage) per round whenever this effect is desired by the last intelligent being to touch the stone (so long as the stone is within 30 feet of the being). The controller of the ziose is free to do other things while the stone is operating—even perform quite exacting tasks such as spellcasting, playing musical instruments, picking locks, and the like. A ziose stone can function continuously in this way for seven rounds, but then falls inert for two turns before being usable again. If it is never used for seven continuous rounds, no rest period is necessary.

**Zircon:** A brownish crystal found in igneous (volcanic) rocks, zircon attains the pale blue shade valued in the gemstone trade through skilled heating and cutting. It is usually cut into facets. These semiprecious stones are occasionally passed off as more valuable gemstones, though anyone with the slightest knowledge of gemstones—a jeweler, a gnome, a dwarf, an even an adventurer of long standing, or anyone with the appraising or gem cutting nonweapon proficiencies—can tell the difference. Zircons take enchantments readily and are one of the favorite gemstone types to serve as the base for a *gem*, *scarab*, or (when cut and ground into cusps) eye magical item.

# Raw Materials: Metals

Minstrels would have you believe there are metals that can talk even before they are forged, and places where metal grows as trees, gleaming in glorious plenty for anyone who finds the hidden groves, but I have yet to see such things with my own eyes and remain what some sages call "strongly unconvinced." This section is not an exhaustive guide to the pure metals and alloys used in Faerûnian magic, but rather practical notes on the most commonly used metallic substances used in magic and the construction of magical items and the most common magical treatments for metals. Metals and alloys are listed together, alphabetically. A dwarf would chortle at the scanty magical lore gathered here, and it will even look paltry to the eyes of most sorcerer-smiths, who know and use far more alloys and a surprisingly large number of additional rare metals than I describe here. Yet these pages provide an overview of the value of certain metals to magic, a subject rife with distortions and misunderstandings even among mages.





A busy smith's shop.

**Adamant:** This is the pure metal form of the hard, jet-black ferromagnetic ore known as *adamantite*, from which the famous alloy *adamantine* is made. Adamant is rarely found in nature, but when it is, it is always be in large spherical pockets in hardened volcanic flows.

Adamant is one of the hardest substances known on Toril, but it is also brittle. A sword made of adamant could slice through most metals—but would snap off if struck by another blade or even a smartly wielded wooden cudgel. It sees use in Faerûn only in dwarven experimentation<sup>50</sup> and in styluses used to etch metal with names, strike chased ornamentation, and imprint inscriptions. Such a stylus shatters if dropped to the floor, though the chips can be used to scratch things. Adamant styluses typically costs 35 to 50 gp, if one can be found at all; Waterdeep and the Great Rift of the dwarves are the best places to shop for one.

Adamant is a gleaming, glossy black. Any reflections seen in it acquire rainbow edges, and this peculiar optical property is the sure-fire way to identify this surprisingly light, valuable metal.

Adamant is worth five times its weight in gold and takes enchantments readily. Some dwarves have worked together with human wizards to make adamant plate armor bound about with enchantments so that when it shatters, the pieces hang together around the wearer, providing some—albeit flawed—protection. Specifically, adamant shields against all fire and heat, magical or nonmagical,

that it comes in contact with, so a wearer of adamant armor can stride through a small fire (one which still allows him the use of some oxygen to breathe) unscathed and even emerge from a *fireball* blast suffering only 1d6 points of damage from fiery damage to exposed areas. Items made primarily of adamant automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +6 bonus to all item saving throws vs. magical fire and a +4 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, disintegration, and lightning. Unless items are enchanted to compensate for adamant's brittle nature, however, they receive a -4 penalty on all item saving throws vs. crushing blow and fall.

Adamantine: This alloy, of five-eighths adamant to two-eighths silver and one-eighth electrum (itself a natural alloy of silver and gold) retains the hardness of adamant, but combines it with a rugged durability that makes adamantine so hard to shatter that it is the favored substance for the making of war hammer heads, the best nonmithral armor, and harbor chains. (By one of the miracles granted by the gods, adamantine can also be derived by combining steel and mithral—if one knows how. (51) Adamantine is black, but has a clear green sheen in candlelight—a sheen that sharpens to purple-white under the light given off by most magical radiances and by will-o'-wisps.

Adamantine is tricky to make, and must be forged and worked at very high temperatures by smiths who know exactly what they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Volo: Dwarves are forever searching for even better alloys than the famous adamantine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Elminster: The process is almost as arcane as that necessary for making a *philosopher's stone* and requires a smith, a mage, a priest, and an alchemist—at least—to complete.



are doing and who have access to special oils to slake and temper the hot metal in. Almost all such expert smiths are dwarves, as the Deep Folk guard the secrets of working adamant jealously, but a priest or wizard seeking to enchant items can make use of finished adamantine items and need not necessarily have to work with a smith to create an adamantine work anew.

Adamantine readily takes enchantments, adding a +2 bonus to all saving throws of *awakening*, *enchant an item*, *holy vesting*, and *wondrous web* spells cast upon it. It is often the primary material for enchanted armors.

Items made primarily of adamantine automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +4 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, disintegration, fall, magical fire, and lightning.

**Arandur:** Once the exclusive secret of the gnomes, this legendary metal has since been worked by elven smiths of Evereska and Evermeet. Many gnomish locks and hooks, as well as some fabled elven warblades, have been forged of arandur, though new forgings—and folk who know how to work the ore—are both rarer than ever today.

Arandur is a rare natural metal found in igneous rock, usually as streaks of blue-green ore amid vitreous glass. So that it does not become as brittle as the glass it is found in, it must be tempered with the blood of a red or blue dragon in its forging. Because of this, working it is not a task for the roadside village smith. The finished forged metal is silver-blue with a green reflective shine.

Arandur bonds with other metals so well that *Merald's meld* and *crown meld* spells are not necessary when enchanting an item made of it and other metals. It is famous for holding a sharp edge even when abused and was the favored material of old for making *swords of sharpness* and *vorpal* weapons.

Items made primarily of arandur automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. fall, normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +3 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, disintegration, magical fire, and lightning. Arandur also partially absorbs *magic missile* energy pulses; folk who wield a sword or shield made of arandur or wear arandan armor take ld2 (to a minimum of 1) fewer points of damage per *magic missile* bolt directed at them.

Copper: This well-known pure metal, with its distinctive pinkish sheen, is the best widely available purifier and amalgamator among metals. It is soft and easily worked, widely known in Faerûn, and appears here because its role as a magical purifier and neutralizing agent cannot be overemphasized. The wizard and especially the priest seeking to work with a substance or item not suited to his or her faith or purpose can make the offending item usable by adding at least half the item's weight of copper to the item. (For example, by sheathing it in copper or adding a longer handle plated in copper, or similar means.) Holy or unholy water should not be stored for any length of time in copper vessels, because the metal will neutralize either in 2d4 months, changing them to normal water. Items made primarily of copper make all item saving throws at the normal listings for metal.

**Darksteel:** The composition of this alloy is (or was) a secret of the possibly extinct Ironstar dwarf clan. It is unheard-of to find a new item made of darksteel, though a rare and lucky few delvers into deep places have come upon ingots of darksteel. (A darksteel

ingot is about as large as the empty area in the middle of four rectangular human warriors' shields stood up long-edges-together to form a hollow square when viewed from above.)

Darksteel behaves like steel but is lighter, and when coated in certain oils whose formula is known to few<sup>52</sup> and heated in even a small fire, it becomes molten, and can be poured into molds—even simple sand molds—to be cast into a new shape. Remarkably, this does not destroy or (usually) alter existing enchantments on the metal. Moreover, darksteel is durable and takes new enchantments readily, even if it is already dweomer-laden. All of this makes darksteel very valuable (about 10 to 12 times more than gold, by weight), and it is eagerly sought by dwarves and by adventurers of other races. Certain smiths in Neverwinter and Water-deep have standing offers of 7,000 gp or more for an intact darksteel ingot.

Darksteel is silvery in hue when polished or cut, but its exposed surfaces have a deep, gleaming purple luster. It has the unique property of absorbing all natural and magical lightning or electrical energy (not heat, and not *magic missiles* or other pure energy pulses) into itself, without conducting any of it—or its damage—to a wearer or being in contact with it.

Items made primarily of darksteel automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. fall, normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +3 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, disintegration, and magical fire, and a +5 bonus to all item saving throws vs. lightning.

**Dlarun:** This bone-white metal can take a high polish and is often mistaken for ivory when seen in finished items, but it has a distinctive greenish sheen in candlelight and when in the presence of magical radiances. Dlarun is a little-known metal of the halflings, who take care to keep word of it as paltry and as inaccurate as possible. Dlarun is usually encountered after having been formed by halflings into small figurines, inlay plates, or knobs and pommels shaped like beast claws, acorns, or other elements of nature.

Derived from roasting clay dug from the banks of certain rivers, dlarun is first gathered as white chips among fire ash that are then melted in a hot crucible that is filled with a secret mixture of liquids. A lump of soft, soaplike metal results that can be readily carved by anyone with a sharp knife. When the desired end result has been achieved, a second heating—in the open flames of a fire fueled and supplemented by secret ingredients, this time—transforms the metal into lightweight rigidity. It is thus ideal for item adornment and has the added property of steadying the mind of any being in direct (bare flesh) contact with it, allowing them to make all saving throws vs. enchantment/charm and illusion/phantasm spells (and similar psionic or spell-like power effects) at a +1 bonus.

Items made primarily of arandur automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. fall, normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +1 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, disintegration, magical fire, and lightning.

**Gold:** This well-known pure metal is the softest of workable metallic substances, and one of the best conductors among them. Despite its high value, it is relatively common and is favored for use in ornamentation in the making of magical items, often being used as an inlay in graven runes or inscriptions, where *meld* mag-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Elminster: The formulae are preserved in Candlekeep and in several other libraries around the Sea of Fallen Stars. But they are by no means easy to locate in those libraries or to decipher once found.



ics can keep it from being damaged or falling out through rough handling.

Gold has the important ability to hold multiple enchantments—even conflicting ones—and keep them from affecting each other or the stability of the gold-adorned item. It therefore makes all dweomerflow magics entering an item in which it is present (even in very small amounts) automatically succeed. In other words, saving throws for magical charge transfers are always made at the receiving end, if that end is an item having gold in its makeup. Items made primarily of gold make all item saving throws at the normal listings for metal.

**Hizagkuur:** This extremely rare white metal is named for its long-ago dwarf discoverer and is found only in scattered, but very rich, deposits deep in the Underdark as a soft, greenish-gray clay-like ore or a flaky mud. Its preparation is complex, and it is a secret known only to a very few senior dwarven smiths and elders. If even a single element of the process is wrong, the hizagkuur remains mud and not a usable metal.

If successfully transformed into a metal, hizagkuur must be cast, worked, or forged into final form within a day and thereafter can never be worked again. (If an item made of hizagkuur is broken, only magical mendings accomplished by *limited wish* or *wish* spells can repair it.) If hizagkuur is left untouched for that 24 hours, it becomes inert and unworkable unless either a *wish* or *limited wish* is cast and properly worded to allow a second chance at working it.

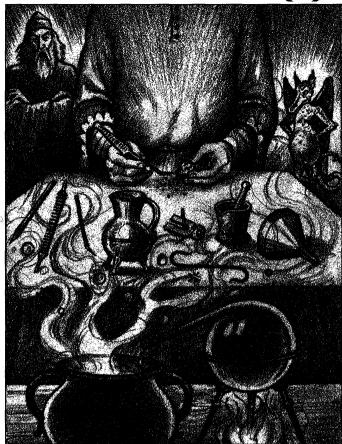
Hizagkuur is unsuitable for use in the crafting of magical items or items that are to be worn because once it has cooled and hardened after being worked, it reflects all magic cast at it 100 percent back at the source and also deals 2d12 points of electrical damage per touch (or per round of continued contact) to all beings coming into contact with it. It sees most use as a sheathing for fortress gates, vault doors, and seals on coffers or hatches of crucial importance.

Items made primarily of hizagkuur automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +6 bonus to all item saving throws vs. magical fire and lightning and a +1 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, crushing blow, fall, and disintegration.

Mithral: Known as *truemetal* to the dwarves, this silvery-blue, shining metal is derived from soft, glittering, silvery-black ore found in rare veins and pockets all over Faerûn—from the depths of the Underdark to surface rocks, particularly in the easternmost Sword Coast North lands. Mithral can be combined with steel (varying alloys of iron and carbon) to derive adamantine if one has no access to adamantite ore, but this process is both difficult and known only to a very few dwarves, who do not perform it for nondwarves unless there is a *very* good reason.

Mithral is the lightest and most supple of metals hard enough to be used in the making of armor; it is extremely valuable. Against magical attacks, it has an unpredictable nature: Whenever magic contacts it, roll 1d12. On an odd result, it does nothing; on an even result, it alters the magic, either giving a +1 saving throw bonus to beings very nearby (in other words, the wearer of mithral armor) or lessening damage done by the magic by 1 point per die. (The result more favorable to the mithral wearer or bearer should be chosen.)

Items made primarily of mithral automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. normal fire, cold, and electricity. They



Close supervision is the only way a wizard can know that fine metalwork or other tasks are performed according to the proper procedures to enable enchantment.

receive a +2 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, disintegration, magical fire, and lightning and a +6 bonus to all item saving throws vs. crushing blow and fall.

Silver: This relatively common valuable pure metal is known to the elves as "the sheath and shield of Art" because, of all metals, it is the most associated with and suitable for magic. Some Faerûnians believe silver is the hardened tears of the goddess Selûne, and in the eldest dwarven tongues, the names for silver meant "the blood of alloys," referring to its versatility in making one metal combine with another. Many dwarves use silver in various alloy formulae of their own devising—or that have been handed down through clans for generations. Most of the beauty of metalwork down through the ages has been associated with the gleam and hue of mirror-polished, untarnished silver, and it has always been associated with the adornment of magical items.

Enchanted items that involve moon-related magics, electricity or lightning, and pure energy discharges (such as magic missiles) will always automatically make all saving throws related to awakening, enchant an item, holy vesting, wondrous web, Merald's meld, crown meld, Obar's lesser purification, Azundel's purification, higher consecration, and any other purification spells cast upon them if silver is their dominant ingredient (60% or greater composition by mass). If the silver content of an item is between 50% and 60%, the metal instead confers a +4 bonus on all such saving throws.



On other sorts of magical items, silver confers only one benefit: Silver content of 50% or greater gives a +2 bonus to all rolls associated with the success of purification, strengthening, and melding spells. Certain elven folk, and many senior Harpers, are known to command secret processes that exploit other magical benefits of silver. Dwarves are known to be able to combine it with mithral to make several lightning-warding alloys, so that a warrior clad in full plate armor made of such alloys can take the lightning strikes of a furious storm without harm and fight on.

Items made primarily of silver make all item saving throws at the normal listings for metal.

**Telstang:** Originally a gnomish secret, this alloy of copper, mithral, platinum, and silver has been adopted by the halflings and by certain elven and orc peoples in the Sword Coast North. Its making remains known to few, and in many writings it is hidden behind the term "truesilver," which has also been applied to mithral, or the phrase "the trusty metal," often misunderstood by human sages to mean steel or perhaps bronze—the very mistake the writers hoped they would make.

Telstang is a dull silver in hue, rather like pewter, and is known as the singing metal because it gives off a clear bell-like tone when struck. It is nonferromagnetic but readily forgeable, though it tends to be brittle and easily snapped off or shattered in large pieces. It never oxidizes and so lasts forever if not struck or dropped.

Telstang's shortcomings make it unsuitable for use in weapons or armor, but it is often worn (by folk who know of and can get it) as bracers, buckles, brooches, pendants, and the like because of its most valuable property: Telstang and all organic material in contact with or encased in it cannot be altered in state; that is, a warrior wearing telstang and the telstang itself cannot be affected by paralyzation, polymorph spells, disintegrate, petrification, shape change, and similar attacks. However, such a being also cannot be aided by beneficial magical state-altering effects such as those conferred by such spells as spider climb and water breathing.

Except where the special property of telstang comes into play, items made primarily of this metal automatically succeed in all item saving throws vs. normal fire, cold, and electricity. They receive a +2 bonus to all item saving throws vs. acid, disintegration, magical fire, and lightning, and save normally vs. crushing blow and fall.

Zardazik This rare, durable, amber-to-red ferromagnetic metal is (thus far, at least) found only in mountains and delves around the Lake of Steam and in certain sand-scoured fissures in the heart of Raurin. It is a very soft metal, and because of this is never used in pure form, but rather alloyed or used to sheath other metals. It can be added to other metals in perfect bondings, apparently vanishing into them in alloys that have all the properties of the other metal—plus the one benefit of zardazil: the ability of any item partially or wholly composed of it to body phase with the first being whose blood it spills.

When a zardazil blade wounds its first creature, it inexorably begins a spell-like internal alteration that takes a full turn (though it can be used normally during that time and does not look or feel any different). At the end of that turn, the zardazil weapon behaves as it has always done for and to all other beings in Faerûn, but it cannot ever harm the being it first wounded again. Instead, the weapon passes through the body of that being harmlessly, as though the body is not present, in a manner similar to, but not

exactly like, an *ironguard* spell.<sup>53</sup> Such woundings are often done deliberately to enable a being to carry a concealed weapon: The weapon is simply slid *into* the body and carried internally until needed, whereupon—without bloodshed or internal damage—it is plucked forth for use. At least three Waterdhavian noble ladies have drawn forth daggers tied to throat jewelry from their bodies in recent years to defend themselves against attackers, and it is suspected that Ardrethra Laurindar, a professional slayer who has posed as an evening escort in Calimport and Westgate to gain access to her targets, also employs such a weapon.

No matter how small the amount of zardazil used in the making of a weapon, the entire weapon enters a state of *body phase*: It is able to coexist with the body it is linked to, and out of the reach of all magics such as *heat metal*, *enlarge*, or other spells that spell-casters may attempt to apply to do harm to the weapon carrier. This causes it to fall right through the body of the carrier unless a nonmetal part of the weapon is present. Usually a leather hilt grip or a loop of cord strung through a hole in the pommel is used to prevent this. The weapon hangs, swinging freely inside the body, from this nonmetal part, so the part is usually fastened to an anchor on body armor or a harness in the shoulder area.

The presence of a body-phased zardazil blade does not affect the body containing it in any way—weight, bodily processes, spells cast on the person, and so on are all unchanged. The blade moves with the body if magic or physical actions cause the body to *tele-port*, change planes, and the like, but is itself (both metal and protruding nonmetal portions) unaffected by magic—even when this causes it to part company with the body it is linked to. Blood, poisons, and other contaminants a blade might have acquired while in use are not communicated to the body when the blade is slid back home; it is in *body phase* rather than being in direct contact with organs, bones, and flesh.

Note that a zardazil blade does not pass through clothing without doing damage. A blade's sheath can also be in *body phase* if it is all-metal and contains zardazil, so a swordpoint that might happen to protrude from a twisting or bending body need not be uncovered and dangerous. Except by such an emergence, a zardazil blade in *body phase* does not betray its presence in any way, including to magical scrying or metal detection. Multiple nonmetal anchors, such as leather thongs tied to fine chains affixed to the top and bottom of a sheath and incorporated into external garments could well prevent unintended exposures of zardazil weapons. Some anchors have been cleverly woven into long hair or otherwise concealed so that seemingly defenseless prisoners have surprised their captors by producing weapons.

Except where the special property of zardazil comes into play, items containing zardazil make all saving throws as the metal the zardazil is bonded with.

### Treatments

Dwarven, gnomish, and elven smiths all know ways to make metal weapons and armor beautiful, durable, and rust-resistant—in fact, there are almost as many secret treatments as there are smiths at work. The most well-known of these are blueshine and everbright, practiced by dwarves for centuries; another is Halabar's stealth, a treatment that improves the ability of a metallic weapon to be employed covertly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>The *ironguard* spell is detailed in the *Pages From the Mages* source book.



Blueshine: Blueshine is normally acquired through a complex series of precisely timed heatings, slakings, and prolonged baths in arcane mixtures of rare and enchanted liquids known to include cockatrice feather distillate, drops of the blood of various draconian species, and *sweet water* potions. A human wizard, Toth of Calimport, recently developed a spell that duplicates the effects of blueshine—and was slain by the Red Wizards for his efforts. Toth's spell had already been stolen by a rival mage before the Thayans tried to make it exclusively their own, and appears here for the first time in any publication. It is a 4th-level wizard spell whose effects precisely duplicate the end result of the successful *blueshine* process.

Blueshine (Wiz 4; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: The metal parts of any one item that is less than

the caster's own body volume in size

Saving Throw: None

This spell serves to alter and protect metals. The caster touches one item, which may be crafted of any number of inorganic substances joined together but must not be larger in total volume than the caster's body, and the blueshine instantly takes effect. Organic substances, such as glues, can be present in the object, but if they make up more than a tenth of its total volume, the spell fails. Any fractures or weaknesses existing in the item are purged, so that they are whole, look like new, and are free of blemishes. In addition, the metals are made more resistant to acids. An item treated with blueshine gains a bonus of + 1 on all item saving throws vs. acid and all corrosive effects, from venom to various bloods to ochre jelly secretions to black dragon acid. A blueshine spell also prevents future rusting and purges the metals of all oxidation, causing affected metal to revert to its former state, not merely melting rust away and leaving the item thinner or with gaps and holes. All metals treated with a blueshine spell glow with a deep blue sheen when they catch available light.

The material component for this spell is a small piece of cobalt blue glass or a chip of a blue-hued gemstone.

Everbright: This long, difficult, and exacting dwarven process is now known to smiths of other races, but it has thus far defied all efforts to duplicate its end results with a spell. At least three mages—Athlagh of the Many Locks (who resides in Firepost Towers in Ithmong), Halandrar Crowncloak of Ulkan, and Spelargh of Phelzol—and one archpriest, Beltorvan Duircragh, Bright Blade of Tempus in the Bloodbright Temple of Dolselar, have mounted long-running, continuing researches to this end with no success.

Metals treated with *everbright* gain an enduring bright shine (akin to chromium) and become immune to tarnishing and other discoloration, acidic corrosion, and rusting—even that caused by rust monster antennae. The passage of time does not affect the efficacy of *everbright* protection, but it can be broken if a pro-

tected item is shattered into more than three pieces or comes into contact with lava, dragon fire, spellfire, or the heat of a forge hotter than that used in the latter stages of the *everbright* application.

Habalar's Stealth: The only widespread metal treatment devised by a human is this process of immersing and boiling items in a bath of *stealthslake*. The secret formula for stealthslake is known only to the House of Halabar merchant clan in Murann, which guards it viciously. The descendants of Halabar are rumored to employ certain intelligent, shapechanging monsters to strike at lore thieves where they cannot easily do so in person—targets such as Waterdhavian nobles and lords of Westgate.

Halabar's stealth renders metallic items nonferromagnetic, nonreflective, and silent, not clanging even when struck against other metals or stone with force. Treated items are able to take dyes and paints, so that even bare sword blades can readily be changed in color and thus concealed from long-range detection. Treated items still strike sparks at sharp impacts and when broken and conduct lightning as well as ever.

# Raw Materials: Woods

Faerûn is a land of trees, sporting a great variety of such flora. Many varieties found in Faerûn are known widely on other planes and in the worlds within other crystal spheres, such as Oerth and Krynn. Trees of the Realms found on other crystal spheres include: apple, ash, beech, birch, cedar, cherry, chestnut, coconut palm, cork, cypress, date palm, ebony, elm, hawthorn, hickory, hornbeam, ironwood, mangrove, maple, oak, pine, rubber, spruce, thorn, willow, and yew. In warmer regions, the date palm, coconut palm, ebony, cypress, and mangrove are common. Evergreens exist in the northern regions, and most hardwoods live in the central forests. Birch and yew are present throughout Faerûn, but rare.<sup>54</sup> Cork and rubber trees are found only in particular areas in the far South.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the Realms possesses more than a few apparently unique types of trees. These include: beetle palm, blueleaf, calantra, chime oak, duskwood, felsul, hiexel, laspar, phandar, roseneedle pine, shadowtop, silverbark, suth, vundwood, weirwood, and zalantar. There are likely to be many more sorts of these homegrown trees than Faerûnian mages are aware of-and more distant corners of Toril could well hold many, many more.

This is not an exhaustive guide to the flora of Faerûn, but merely a light overview for the use of folk interested in using wood as a material in the making of magical items and for other magical purposes. Each wood mentioned herein is rated for its suitability for long-term use (in magical items) and as a consumable (a material component for spell use). The most common of the unique trees of Faerûn are listed hereafter alphabetically.

**Beetle Palm:** Beetle palm trees, named for their black bark, which looks like a beetle's carapace, are found mainly in the midwood of the great forest Cormanthor. On average, they grow to 70 feet in height, but a few grow to heights of 100 feet or more. Clusters of spindly, spiky fronds often mistaken for leafless branches crown their otherwise smooth trunks, and a small cluster<sup>56</sup> of soft-rinded, smooth, black, bitter-tasting nuts the size and general

<sup>56</sup> Elminster: Approximately 4d4 nuts grow per season, and I wouldn't be caught by a druid harvesting all of them, if ye catch my drift.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Volo: From hoary sages I have also learned that trees known as alder, boxwood, the plane tree, redwood, and sycamore, well known in other spheres, are absent from the Realms.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Elminster: Supplies of these two woods are disappearing quickly due to heavy harvests. Many recent explorations of the lands of Chult have been undertaken simply to find a new supply of these woods.





Trees of the Realms (left- to right): Blueleaf duskwood, felsul, hiexel, laspar, and phandar.

shape of plums grow under the fronds, dropping off once a year after the first snowfall.

Beetle palm wood is a dull brown and lightens as it dries, becoming a mellow tan. Beetle palm wood contains oily deposits that make it exceptionally flammable, but long-burning rather than volatile; it burns nearly three times as long as other types of wood and produces about half the amount of smoke. The wood is sturdy, but not outstanding, and it has a tendency to snap in sections from 2 to 3 feet long after it has dried, so it is not often used in making buildings or carts.

Beetle palm wood conveys no special properties to items made from it or spells cast when using it as a material component. Beetle palm nuts, however, are exceptionally effective if used as a substitute material component in the *goodberry* priest spell.<sup>57</sup> When so used, they enable up to a huge (size H), hungry creature to eat the soft outer rind and be as well-nourished as if a full normal meal were eaten or cure 1d2+2 points of physical damage from wounds or other similar cases. The curative properties of *goodberry*-affected beetle palm nuts do not have a daily maximum, and such nuts remain magical and do not rot for one year. It is considered poor form by most nature religions not to try and plant the inner, hard-cased kernel nuts left over from such an enchanted nut, though few so planted seeds have ever been noted to grow.

Calantra: This species is found south and east of Mosstone in the Forest of Tethir and in all the woodlands south and east of there as far as northern Chult and the Shaar. One of the favorite carving woods of Calimshan and the Tashalar thanks to its durability and ability to absorb human oils and moisture for years after being cut so as to avoid decaying, drying, out, or splitting, calantra is the heartwood of the calan tree. Calans are stout, red-barked trees with deep brown wood that grow to no more than 11 feet in height and consist of thick trunks with no side-branches that rise up into a gnarly crown of many small, interwoven branches. Most humans can traverse calan stands only in a hunched-over posture, making such travelers easy prey for shorter creatures who can move at will among the trees below the canopy.

Calan trees are as hardy alive as they are dead, withstanding most frosts, fires (even red dragon breath), and floods. Much used in the making of furniture, travel chests, and walking sticks, calantra is prized by those who craft magical items because of this hardiness: It makes all item saving throws with +2 bonus over other woods. This increases to a +3 bonus if an item composed at least 20% of calantra bears any sort of enchantment, but strong or multiple enchantments cannot augment this bonus beyond +3. Calantra does not have any special properties when used as a spell component and may be used with safety and normal results whenever any nonspecific type of wood, leaf, stick, sawdust, or similar wood product is called for.

Chime Oak: Chime oak trees are a very rare type of tree that thrives in the northern sections of the east starwood, a section of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Elminster: A ranger friend of mine who lives in Cormanthor, Lyra Sunrose, tells me that if ye try to cast *badberry* on beetle palm nuts, it doesn't work. The whole batch of nuts goes bad.



the great forest Cormanthor. They resemble normal oak trees made of transparent glass, though the leaves often carry a slight greenish tinge. Aside from their appearance, chime oaks are indistinguishable from other oaks; birds nest in their branches, they sprout and grow from seedlings, their limbs can be cut and burned for firewood. Unlike normal oaks, however, chime oaks do not lose their leaves in the autumn. Instead, the leaves freeze solid, remaining frozen throughout the autumn and winter until they thaw in the spring. Light breezes cause the frozen leaves to tinkle like wind chimes, producing a soothing, pleasant sound especially attractive to basilisks. These creatures can often found curled up near the trunks, eyes closed, completely relaxed.

Chime oak wood gradually loses its transparent quality as it dries (as do chime oak leaves), becoming a silvery-white hue when fully dry. It can be used in manufacturing magical items in the same way that oak is. However, when used in the manufacture of magical musical instruments, it gives the instruments a very sweet and pure sound.

Chime oak wood is impervious to cold, whether of a magical or natural nature, and items made primarily of chime oak retain this quality, automatically succeeding at all item saving throws vs. cold. Items containing less than 45% chime oak wood (by volume) than other types of material retain a residual bonus of this resistance as a +1 bonus to their item saving throws vs. cold. Chime oak wood and leaves can be substituted for normal oak wood and leaves interchangeably in spells, but they otherwise have no special properties when used as a material component.

**Blueleaf:** This species is found north of Amn from the Sword Coast to Impiltur, although a rare few blueleaf trees have been seen growing in Chessenta, Turmish, and the Border Kingdoms. Blueleafs (not "blueleaves") grow close together in thick stands and reach 40 feet in height, but rarely attain trunk diameters of over 8 inches. Blueleaf trees have many small branches that begin about halfway up their trunks; branches grow in spiderweblike swirls around the trunks.

These delicately built, but supple, trees are instantly recognizable when in leaf because of the eerie, gleaming blue color of their many-pointed leaves. <sup>58</sup> Blueleafs bend in high winds or under heavy ice loads rather than breaking, and when curved entirely around like hoops, they form snow tunnels that provide ready shelter for winter travelers—and hungry hunting predators. They yield beautiful leaping blue flames when burned and are thus prized in many inns and taverns, where their light provides moody illumination for taletellers and minstrels in the late evenings. Their sap and crushed leaves yield a vivid blue dye which captures almost all of the glow of the living leaves and is much favored in the making of cloaks in the North.

Blueleaf is a durable, neutral wood popular for use in magical items, which it neither aids nor hampers the enchantment of, and as a material component. If it is the sole consumed material component in a spell (that is, not counting a holy symbol or item to be altered but not used up by the casting), it can reduce the casting time by 1 to a minimum of 1.

**Duskwood:** This tree species grows widely all over Faerûn, and the trees get their name from the dark, eerie appearance of the closely clustered stands they grow in. Duskwoods grow arrowstraight and can reach up to 60 feet in height. They have smooth, bare, nontapering trunks, a crown of tiny, lacy branches at the top,

and black bark, which turns silvery-gray when newly broken or peeled. The wood beneath the bark is always smoky gray and as hard as iron. Their wood's strength helps them survive the axes of woodcutters who come seeking firewood. Most mast spars and building roof beams in Faerûn are made of duskwood spars. Duskwood is also very resistant to fire, smoldering rather than blazing, and because of this, duskwood trees tend to survive forest fires.

Duskwood is suitable for use in the making of staves and rods, but should be avoided in the fashioning of items, where it forces the caster of every *eternal flame* spell involved to make a saving throw vs. spell at -2 or have the spell fail, destroying any previous enchantments successfully cast on or into the item. Its use should also be avoided in the casting of spells that involve fire, where it adds a 20% chance of total spell failure, applied after casting, wherein all material components *except* the duskwood are consumed. The sole exception to this caveat is items and spells of fire resistance; duskwood augments these by increasing their protection by 1 point per die of fiery damage they are forced to ward (operate) against.

**Felsul:** This tree seems to favor cold and poor soil, and in many rocky places in the North and in those parts of northern Anauroch not cloaked in ice, felsuls provide the only tree cover to be seen. Felsuls grow on crags, cliff edges, and clefts where few other trees can find purchase. They are gnarled, twisted trees whose wood crumbles to the touch and is of a dusty cinnamon brown to deep brown hue.

Felsuls grow slowly, maturing only after about 10 years, at which point they are around 3 feet high. At around a decade in age, the soft green, fuzzy-barked straight saplings, which resemble many shrubs, darken and begin to twist and curve as their roots deepen, their upper reaches dry out, and winds begin to shape their frail trunks. Mature felsuls constantly shed flakes of rotting bark, and their wood is prone to split and crack, being too weak and misshapen for use in building or the making of furniture. Felsul wood also burns poorly, but felsul root is favored for use in the carving of small things such as holy symbols, figurines, and toys.

Early each spring, felsuls burst briefly into flower, sprouting vivid, yellow-and-purple blossoms whose crushed petals yield a perfume prized by ladies of high rank throughout the Realms. A sack of these flowers can bring as much as 3 gp in years when these blossoms are scarce.

Felsul is unsuitable for magical use except as a material component in spells designed to hasten withering or decay or increase damage caused by something else. For such magics, this wood serves as a universal replacement, with one chip of felsul wood, bark, or root sufficing per spell as a substitute for the normal material components (provided they need not be specially constructed).

**Hiexel:** This species is very common in the Dales, growing in thickets in ravines and on hillsides. It averages about 30 feet in height, but can grow to reach 70 feet or more in a sheltered spot. Hiexel have gently curved, sparse branches that give the whole tree an upright oval foliage shape.

The wood of these trees, also called simply "hiexel," is brittle, green, and waxy. It succumbs to rot easily, and produces profuse amounts of thick, oily smoke when ignited. This brings it frequent use in signal beacon fires, in the smoking of meat or fish, or in driving beasts or foes out of an enclosed area.

<sup>58</sup> Elminster: Ye would call the leaves of blueleaf trees electric blue in hue and in shape might term them ragged maple leaves.



Hiexel bark is silver-green and neither easily burned nor easily rotted. It has seen use as a binding material for books, including spell tomes, and—stuck down with wooden pegs and sealed with mud and clumps of moss—as a facing material for the outside walls of wooden buildings located in damp locations such as forest glades. Windstorms often fell old or large hiexel, because over time or as they grow big, portions of their wood dry out unevenly. This makes them topple easily and also renders them unsuitable for use in situations of stress or hard usage, such as in sledges or bridges.

Hiexel is unsuitable as a material component for any magic involving water or other liquids. It can serve as a universal replacement component for any spells whose effects involve mists or other vapors, and when so used, it increases the casting time of the spell by 1, but has no affect on other spell particulars. Hiexel should not be used in the making of magical items, as its unstable nature causes such an item to break after Id2 years of service—at most.

Laspar: This evergreen species grows everywhere north of mid-Tethyr and west of Thay and has a distinctive olive-green to copper hue. Laspars look like squat cedars, rarely topping 30 feet in height, and have thick foliage that foils most searching eyes seeking to see under a single tree, let alone a stand of them. Laspar needles are flat and smooth-pointed, and they grow in spherical clusters (known as "shags") at the ends of a cloak of delicate branches that swirl around a straight, strong central trunk. Those trunks have dusty green bark that tends to form a surface of many small, interlocked, concave plates. Under the bark is a goldenhued wood that is easily worked, like pine, but is also pitchy like pine, spitting too many sparks for safe burning.

Boiled laspar needles are an effective laxative well known to the lore of the North, and crushed needles are used in the making of certain scents, such as those worked into torches and candles of superior quality. The sharp, distinctive laspar smell seems to attract laspar moths, which lair only in laspar trees. They are gray furry-winged, but only fearsome-looking, things that have wingspans as large as 8 inches and a body length of up to 4 inches.

Laspar is unsuitable for use in magical items or any other permanent magic, but for spells involving transformations of shape or state, a handful of laspar needles are a universal replacement component, decreasing the casting time of the spell by 1.

**Phandar:** This type of tree seldom grows north of about the midpoint of the High Forest and is now rare all across Faerûn due to heavy cutting. It grows to about 60 feet in height with terrifically strong, springy curving boughs sprouting in great numbers from a massive, knobby central trunk, which greatly resembles the feared monster known as a roper, though the trunk, at 20 feet or so in height, is much taller than a roper. Its leaves of mottled, varicolored green are shaped roughly like an egg laid horizontally. Their long axes point in the direction the wind is blowing, so a stand of phandars all seem to be pointing in one direction.

Phandar wood is greenish-brown and striped with thin black grain lines throughout. When the wood is cut for use in the making of jewelry or coffers, the grain forms striking waves of curling parallel lines. Tool and weapon handles, bows, and the musical instruments known as tocken are often fashioned of phandar wood, though its curving nature makes it unsuitable for spears, wands, staves, and other forms where straightness is desirable.

Phandars are very hardy; many leafy sprigs are carried for many miles and long days before being simply thrust into the earth or let fall onto it—and have subsequently grown, without

attention, into towering trees. A phandar stump often grows a new tree, and even waste boughs tossed into a heap have been known to root and sprout. This has probably saved the tree from total extinction at the hands of loggers, who prize the central trunks of phandar trees because they are strong enough to support heavy roofs and can be chiseled to accept crossbeams without cracking or splitting.

Phandar wood is ideal for the making of durable magical items that need not be straight and as an ingredient in all healing potions and enchanted unguents. When used in a magical item, phandar wood requires no purification magics and prolongs all wondrous web or holy vesting spells cast upon items even partially made from it for one additional round.

Roseneedle Pine: Roseneedle pines grow in Faerûn's temperate forests along riverbanks and are most plentiful in Cormanthor, where they thrive along the banks of the Ashaba, growing there the year round. They are miniature evergreens that resembles yews and seldom exceed 3 feet tall, with trunks that grow no bigger than 4 inches in diameter. A roselike blossom, pink or white, sprouts from the end of each of their tiny needles during the late spring and early summer. A roseneedle's roots extend into the ground and then spread out in a wide circle often in excess of 10 feet in radius around the tree trunk. The roots end in fat tubers the size of a potato. Chunks of the tubers make excellent fishing bait; fisherfolk can easily double their day's catch when using them.

Roseneedle wood is pitchy, like other pine woods, and burns with a great many sparks, though not with any special degree of heat or amount of smoke. It is gnarled and unsuitable to being crafted into many items other than small figurines, but it is soft enough that a great deal of detail can be easily imparted to any small items carved from it. Tinctures made from roseneedle tubers or flowers are often used in the preparation of magical items made to control or summon aquatic life, especially fish, and roseneedle pine needles can be used as a universal replacement component for any sort of fish or piece of a fish required as a material component for a spell.

**Shadowtop:** These trees are the soaring giants of the forests of Faerûn. They grow as quickly as 2 feet a year if the weather is warm and damp enough, can exist in all except arctic climates, and can reach 90 feet or more in height if undisturbed. A full-grown shadowtop flares out to 20 feet or more in diameter at its base, and its trunk is textured all around with many pleatlike ridges. Shadowtops only sprout branches from the uppermost dozen feet or so of their trunks, and the trees are named for the dense clusters of feathery leaves that grow from these spreading branches at the tops of their trunks. Shadowtop leaves are irregular in shape, with many fingers, and have copper-colored undersides and deep green upper surfaces. In autumn, the tops change hue to match the underneath sides before the leaves drop.

Shadow wood is fibrous and tough, but unsuitable for carving or structural work because it tends to split down its length under stress into a splayed mass of fibers. The fibers are valued in rope-making, and a few at a time added to the twist adds considerably to the strength and durability of a completed coil. Shadow wood burns slowly but cleanly, generating a very hot fire with little smoke, though it typically does not ignite at all unless held in the leaping flames of an already-established fire. The wood's qualities as a fuel make it ideal for use when cooking. If a woodcutter with



fewer than five wagons fells a mature shadowtop, wood is always left over that cannot be carried away in a single trip; by tradition, travelers are free to cut enough from this remainder for one night's fire.

Shadow wood is much used in the making of magical staves, rods, and wands. *Crown melds* are never necessary when an item contains shadow wood; *Merald's meld* joins automatically succeed at their saving throws and other die rolls when covering a join with shadow wood. (Treat the item as if it has the benefits of a *crown meld.*) Because of an innate quality of shadow wood, the wood is also always considered to have been harvested in a manner related to the enchantment it will receive or bathed in an appropriate substance, whatever the actual manner of its procurement and preparation was.

Silverbark: This species flourishes in wet ground throughout Faerûn, generally near bogs and swamps, but sometimes in deep, flooded ravines in the depths of large forests. Silverbarks are thin and straight, seldom growing more than a 15 feet tall or more than 4 inches in diameter. They are plentiful, and grow in thickets, from which they are easily cut. Silverbark wood is reddish and dries out thoroughly after it is cut, becoming very light but also very brittle after a year or so. The deep red leaves are large and oval with pointed tips, tiny saw-toothed edges, and purple bases. They are waxy and strong and are sometimes used to wrap game in—or even to carry kindling—in the wilds. The silver bark for which the tree is named is loose and can be easily torn away (whereupon it crumbles).

Silverbark trunks serve the poor as staves, poles, and as defensive stakes (once points have been whittled and hardened in a slow fire). The weakness of the wood makes it unsuitable for lance shafts, fence rails, or structural work, but its sap is an essential ingredient in poison antidotes and *sweet water* potions. It can be used as a universal replacement component in all purification and antitoxin magics, taking nothing from the effectiveness of such spells but reducing casting time by 1 and replacing all other normally necessary components (unless they must be specially constructed).

**Suth:** The name of this tree may be a corruption of the word "south." These tangled trees with olive-green leaves are found along the edges of the Shaar, in the woods of Chondath, and farther south in Faerûn. They grow almost horizontally and then double back over themselves to angle back in another direction. <sup>59</sup> If a few suth trees grow together, their branches intertwine, lock around each other, and then double back until they are inextricably entangled and form a visual screen and wall barring passage to all things that cannot fly over the tangled trees or scuttle under their lowest branches.

Suth leaves are long, soft, and fluffy, but the ends form spikes. They grow in bunches at the end of each branch and in a ring around the trunk wherever tree limbs branch out or the growing tree changes direction.

Suth wood is very hard and durable. It is so hard that it is difficult to work unless one has the finest tools. Thin sheets of this wood retain astonishing strength for decades and so are favored for use in book covers. Suth is also the preferred wood for shields; it never shatters and does not catch fire as long as it is soaked in water before battle. A crushing blow might crack a suth wood shield, but it would not fly apart if cracked.



Trees of the Realms (left to right): Silverbark, suth, and vundwood.

Items made primarily of suth wood gain a +2 bonus to item saving throws vs. crushing blow and fall. Provided the components need not be specially constructed, suth wood slivers or bark chips can replace all components used in *barkskin, armor*, and similar spells, and spells that toughen the nature of inorganic components or items, such as *Veladar's vambrace* and *holy might*. Suth sap is an essential ingredient in the oil used to anoint metal armor and shields before they are enchanted to improve their Armor Class.

Vundwood: This species of tree is short and scrubby. It thrives on poor ground and grows in small stands in the Tunland and in even more profusion south of Iriaebor in the rolling, seemingly endless hills and plains that separate the Sword Coast from the Dragon Reach lands. The tree is named for the Vunds, an infamous nomadic tribe who lived long ago in what is now considered the Western Heartlands and the Green Fields. These brigands' persistent caravan raids only ended when they were wiped out long ago by folk who lived in what are now Cormyr and Sembia.

Vundwood trees rarely top 15 feet and lack a central trunk; instead, they have many small, radiating branches, which in turn split into smaller branches, and so on. The trees have smooth, thin, dark red bark and pale green leaves edged with white that lighten to yellow when winter is nigh or when a tree is dying. The wood itself is reddish-brown and smells rather like cinnamon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Elminster: Like one of your accordions stood on end.



Vundwood is used as firewood or felled intact and then dragged into tangled lines to form rough paddock enclosures. When used in the making of wands and other magical items that use charges, it exhibits a peculiar echo property, causing an item made of it to spontaneously gain 1d4 charges out of nowhere once every 1d12 months unless the item is totally exhausted. In spell-casting, vundwood serves as a universal replacement material component—replacing *all* consumed components—for all priest and wizard spells that involve recalling an already-cast spell for the use of the caster or augmenting or altering the spellcaster's capacity for spells (such as *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*).

**Weirwood:** Weir trees are now rare and highly prized. Most that survive are deep in the larger forests of Faerûn and actively protected by dryads, treants, druids, and rangers. If undisturbed, weir trees grow into huge, many-branched forest giants. They resemble oaks in appearance, only with leaves that are brown with a silver sheen on the upper surfaces and velvety black on the undersides.

Weir wood does not burn in normal (nonmagical) fire and is resilient and durable. It is favored for the making of lutes, harps, birdpipes, and longhorns because of the unmistakable warm, clear sound it gives to such instruments. Any magically generated radiance (such as *dancing lights*) that is brought into contact with cut or living weirwood lingers around the wood for 1d4+1 rounds after its source expires or is removed—unless the weirwood has any active enchantment upon itself, which negates this property.

Weirwood serves as a replacement component for all spells that normally use oak or holly (bark, leaves, berries, or the wood) and can replace any one consumed component that does not need to be specially constructed in spells that create magical radiance or that provide some protection against, or resistance to, normal or magical fire. If used as an extra material component in spells that create or mend objects (such as *mending*, *wondrous web*, *awakening*, *enchant an item*, *holy vesting*, or *ritual of transference*), it confers a bonus of +1 to all saving throws and ability checks involved in the spellcasting.

Zalantar: This subtropical species is rarely seen north of the Shaar. It is plentiful along the shores of Chult and the southern coasts of Faerûn and seems to grow in any terrain short of mountainous. The leaves of zalantar trees range from white through beige, and the bark and wood of the tree are black—hence its Northern name: "blackwood." Zalantar trees have a central root and eight or more trunks branching out from the root at ground level like the splayed fingers of a hand. The trees may reach 80 feet in height, but they average half that. Zalantar wood is strong, yet easily worked, and sees much use in southern buildings and the making of wagons, litters, and wheels.

Southern sorcerers use zalantar almost exclusively in the making of rods, staves, and wands. It is durable and handsome, and it aids magics cast upon it, providing a +2 bonus to the saving throws associated with a priest or wizard *awakening* spell or a wizard's *enchant an item* spell. When an enchanted or nonmagical item that is wholly or partially made of zalantar is in use, the wood aids all item saving throws with a +1 bonus. It also glows with a very faint mauve radiance when undead beings are within a 70-foot spherical radius.

# Latheebree's Librams

Faerûn seems to bristle with tomes of spells, wizards' diaries, and manuals purporting to set forth this or that magical formula or process; not even Elminster knows where all of these writings lie, <sup>60</sup> and in an ongoing effort to protect my sources (and my skin!) I have refrained from describing what magical writings I found where. I intend to cleave firmly to that tradition in the years ahead, <sup>61</sup> but with one unusual exception: the two tomes described in these pages.

In my defense against the legions of enraged wizards Elminster's forever threatening me with, I can say first that these magical tomes are not spellbooks in the usual sense and that many copies of both apparently exist in the Realms. Both books were created by an unusual sorceress: Latheebree of Athkatla, a jovial, worldly-wise woman of an athletic build who believed that most mages lacked enough of a sense of humor-and that folk who did not have magic needed to be protected against such people. This made her unpopular with many of her colleagues-so much so that no one came to her defense when she was attacked by no less than seven ambitious Red Wizards of Thay. Laeral Silverhand, the Lady Mage of Waterdeep, arrived too late to help Latheebree in the battle, but reports with satisfaction that five Red Wizards were blasted to dust and drifting smoke, one was reduced to a mindless husk, and the last was entombed in the ground by means of a sink spell, where he remains to this day (Laeral placed several layers of harmful runes around him in the ground, and only the outermost three have been triggered by other Red Wizards or their agents, an explosive process that has decidedly dampened Thayan enthusiasm for recovering their comrade).

Although Latheebree's tower and body were both destroyed, the sorceress managed to transfer her essence into one of her books (a *Pantograph Pages*, Laeral believes) and cause it to *teleport* to some other location in Faerûn. Latheebree presumably survives in the book as a watchful sentience, able to cast spells, speak, and communicate by sending visions (according to one mage's report of a book's behavior), and there are even former colleagues of the sorceress (Spundith of Mintarn and Galaergala of Murann) who believe that the Laughing Lady Mage of Athkatla can move her essence at will from book to book of her own creation and thereby travel around the Realms.

Whatever Latheebree's fate, it is my belief that wielders of magic and less fortunate beings alike should be made aware of these helpful books without further delay. The secrecy of some mages is dangerous to the common welfare as well as being frustrating in the extreme and outrageous in its arrogance!<sup>62</sup>

### LaTheebree's Folio of Reversal

XP Value: 4,000

GP Value: 20,000

At least six of these reddish brown, nondescript, oxhide-bound chapbooks exist, although the true number of copies may be 10 times that or more. A *Latheebree's folio of reversal* is two handwidths across by three handwidths in height and about as thick as

Elminster: Ah! At last our Volo begins to grasp the essence of what it is to be an archmage!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Elminster: Well, true. I can tell ye that the Pages From the Mages sourcebook merely scratches the surface of the known spellbooks. I could fill several hundred such sourcebooks with just the readily available tomes and not be nearly done.

<sup>61</sup> Elminster: Ye'd better, clever-tongue, and ye'd better do it with a diligence ye've ne'er shown before or it won't just be me ye'll have to run and hide from. Many an archmage lusts after thy blood, and I can only keep them from thy throat if ye keep to the deal ye've made with me!



a large human male's little finger. It contains only three pages of the finest vellum. The front and back pages are blank, and the middle one contains beautiful swash calligraphy that sets forth words of utter nonsense.

If—and only if—a being "reads" (looks at) every single character on the page and is a creature who has been affected by magic during its lifetime, the power of the folio is awakened. Cursory examinations of the book or detailed perusal by creatures who have never been touched by magic have no effect.

An activated folio removes the effect of the last magic cast on the reader and then itself teleports away. A *folio of reversal* glows with a sudden blue light as it teleports away. Readers are warned that its flight breaks magical barriers, bindings, and tracers. There is no known way for any creature to travel with it or follow it. It is this property of teleportation to random locations elsewhere in Faerûn that makes counting the number of *Lathebree's folio of reversal* in existence so difficult.

The magic the *folio of reversal* reverses can be anything from the damage caused by a *magic missile* to a curse and can have affected the reader as from one second to over hundreds of years ago, but the *folio* removes its effects in the present rather than returning the reading creature to its condition at the time the magic affected it. For example, a female bard who was sorely wounded and received multiple healing spells would lose the hit points bestowed by the last of those spells, but would not be returned to her life-threatening state of the time; any system shock survival rolls would not have to be repeated. *Lathebree's folio of reversal* cannot reverse the effects of a *wish, limited wish, reincarnation, raise dead,* or *resurrection* spell, or, obviously, any magical effects imposed directly upon a creature by a divine being; however, it can reverse the effects of a *slay living* or *destruction* spell.

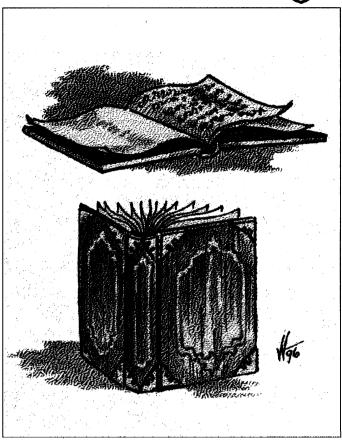
# Latheebree's Pantograph Pages

XP Value:6,000

GP Value:30,000

A Latheebree's pantograph pages is a tome bound in polished slabs of duskwood with its corners capped in copper and with pages of the finest parchment. Over 40 copies of this useful tome are known to exist, and some sages put the number as high as 70. Mages who have such books tend to hold onto them—and keep their possession as secret as possible.

All known copies of this work are three handwidths across and four-and-a-half handwidths high, but they vary in the number of their interior pages, having 1d10+6 when found. When a Lathebree's pantograph pages book was made, all its pages were blank, but whenever a blank page is placed face-down and flat over a complete, functional written spell in another book, on a scroll, or even graven in stone, the page acquires a copy of the spell without altering or discharging the original. The pantograph pages books can thus be used to make (possibly unauthorized) copies of the magic of others or build a library of spells that the book's owner is not yet powerful enough to use. However, writings (even nonmagical ones) concealed by a secret page spell, explosive runes and other harmful written traps, and similar encryptions and flourishes in an original are precisely and perfectly copied without being discharged or activated. They await the reader in the pantograph pages as well as the original when copying is complete.



Latheebree's Librams: Latheebree's Folio of Reversal (top) and Latheebree's Pantograph Pages (bottom).

Each page can be used only once; the copy that appears on it is permanent. Once the last page of a Lathebree's pantograph pages book acquires a spell, the book vanishes 4d20 days later, teleporting to a secret cavern in Faerûn known only to Latheebree. Beings who try to accompany the book on this journey, or leave tracers on it, arrive in or are directed instead to either the city of Sigil in the Outlands or to a random Outer Plane—without the book.

The pantograph pages do not function if placed on writing that is only a partial spell, not a spell at all, or is a spell identical to one already recorded in the book. In other words, words of activation, potion formulae, and the like, do not activate the copying function. The process of copying takes 1 turn. If the book is moved off the original during this time (slight movements from side to side do no harm), the attempt to copy ceases, and that page is ruined. Once the book is removed from the original, a ruined page—still blank—dissipates into thin air, shrinking inexorably to nothingness in 1d4+ 1 rounds.

# Magic in My Hand

It is a great temptation to anyone to try to acquire objects that hold magic—Art crafted by others, often for mysterious purposes long ago. I have held my share of such enticing vessels of mighty, lightly sleeping magic. I was greatly tempted in my youth to try to seize or steal all of these I could find and win my way to power in Faerûn by



wielding the frozen fire of magical items, but what one can seize, another can take away, and in many an item waits a curse, treacherous backlash, or merely an unforeseen peril (or three) attendant on its powers. So I abandoned my scheme, and in the years since I have often deliberately avoided contact with magical items, for I know how strong in me is the hunger to have, and to hold, and to use.

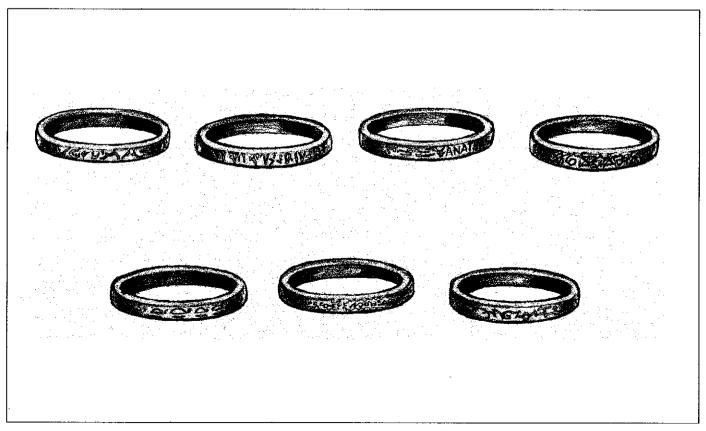
In like manner, I have avoided describing scores of magical items in this guide. For one thing, the owners of such items, even when not spellcasters—or perhaps *especially* when not spellcasters and having no other magic to call on—grew perturbed indeed at the possibility of every last little secret, power, and controlling word of their treasured items appearing in print for all the Realms to see. With that said, I should also reveal that I have faced, or handled, more magic in my days thus far than many a sneering Calishite mage sees in a lifetime, and that a few of the items I have encountered deserve detailed treatment, for a variety of reasons. So, you will find a handful of Faerûnian magical items here. I take no responsibility for the fates of those who seek them.

# The Seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul

The Seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul contain magics of great power. Legends have spoken often of them since the death of their maker, but their locations have rarely been more than a matter of colorful rumor. Mhzentul was a powerful, respected mage who perished at the battle of the River Rising, where he became a pillar of living flame and blazed across the battlefield, destroying many foes. Mhzentul is remembered for his works: the seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul and a book, Mhzentul's Runes, said to contain the process for making a ring of spell storing, information on the construction of rings that become guardian creatures on command, and much research into fire magic. <sup>63</sup> The Zhentarim mage Whisper is known to have found the book and some of the rings, but when he was slain by Doust Sulwood and his companions (the future Knights of Myth Drannor) in his subterranean home, Whisper's Crypt, north of Eveningstar, only two of the rings were found.

The highest-ranking Zhentarim agent in northern Cormyr at the time, Whisper was cruel and coldly calculating. A man of relatively feeble magic, he possessed a cunning mind and gargantuan ambition. His duties were to arrange the ambush of selected merchants and king's messengers, to watch and listen to Cormyrean trade and troop movements, and to pass what he learned on to Darkhold. Whisper did this quietly and well, but at the same time he hatched plans to become far more than a minor Zhentarim wizard by creating a sinister force loyal only to him. He was establishing strongholds of his brigands in the Stonelands when his attacks on Doust's band provoked them to hunt him down, overcome his guardian enchantments and creatures, and destroy him.

<sup>63</sup>More about this tome can be found in the *Pages From the Mages* sourcebook.



The Seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul (left to right): Ring of burning, ring of coldfire, ring of night, ring of scribes (top row); ring of stone, ring of the tshala, and ring of wayfaring (bottom row).



Whisper proved to hold two of the Seven Lost Rings. The Knights gave both of these to the House of the Morning, a temple of Lathander in the village of Eveningstar in Cormyr. They did not find any of the other five rings or *Mhzentul's Runes*.

Four of the Lost Rings and the tome *Mhzentul's Runes* may still lie hidden in Whisper's Crypt in the Stonelands or somewhere in the Haunted Halls north of Eveningstar. The seventh *Lost Ring* may still be in the vicinity of Mhzentul's destruction, perhaps purloined by the undead spirit of an enemy commander Mhzentul fought against. The wizard's essence may be trapped in the ring, or may still exist elsewhere —and in either case, may whisper advice to anyone who puts on the ring.

Each of the Seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul is a simple band, forged of mithral, treated with dwarven *everbright*. Each ring is engraved with a complex series of runes believed to be derived from an ancient elven dialect. The original meanings of these runes have been lost to passing time (even to lore magic).

Each of the Seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul has set powers, suggested by its runes, and the rings share the ability to *heal* a wearer when she or he wills it, becoming dormant for a day as a consequence. This power also purges the wearer of poisons, charms, and unnatural changes in state (*invisibility*, petrification, shapes not their own brought about through magic, and so on). Unlike normal rings of spell storing, all of the seven rings regenerate their stored spells.

### RING of BURNING

**XP Value:** 4,000 **GP Value:** 20,000

The runes on this band suggest leaping flames, and it always feels pleasantly warm. It is reputed to have all the powers of a ring of spell storing, containing (if legends tell truth) the spells Agannazar's scorcher, Beltyn's burning blood, fire gate, Flamsterd's flamestrike (detailed hereafter), and shroud of flame. This is believed to be one of the rings the Knights gave to the House of the Morning, but I do not know if the temple vaults still hold it.

### Ring of Coldfine

**XP Value:** 4,000 **GP Value:** 20,000

The runes inscribed on this band are suggestive of icicles and frost motes, but little more may be learned from mere visual examination. The ring is reputed to have all the powers of a ring of spell storing, containing cold-related magics that include *cone of cold, icelance, moonfire* (detailed hereafter), *Snilloc's snowball swarm,* and *wall of ice.* <sup>64</sup>

### Ring of Night

**XP Value:** 6,500 **GP Value:** 32,000

The runes on this band have swash ornamentations resembling feathered wings in flight, and someone has scratched—in common—the, word or name "Anathas" on the band, but use of this word seems to have no effect on the ring or its powers. The ring of night is thought to be one of the rings given to the House of the Morning.

The wearer of this ring has 90-foot infravision for as long as the ring is worn. In addition, the ring may change into a margoyle once a week. At the wearer's mental command, the ring of night leaves the wearer's finger and transforms into a margoyle of maximum might, standing just in front of its summoner (so long as

there is empty air to permit it to appear).<sup>65</sup> The creature operates under the telepathic direction of the being who summoned it, responding instantly and with unshakeable loyalty. Upon its destruction, exposure to full sunlight (or equivalent magic), or 24 hours after the ring was transformed, whichever occurs first, the margoyle reverts to ring form, and the ring reappears on the finger of the being who summoned it. The ring's magic also ends in the same manner if the summoner wills himself or herself to change places with the margoyle. This power moves the body of the summoner, as with a teleport without error, to the exact space occupied by the body of the margoyle and places the margoyle back in ring form on the same finger of the being that it left. This movement occurs despite any magical barriers, magical compulsions, or physical restraints or obstacles on either summoner or margoyle and does not harm the summoner in any way.<sup>66</sup>

### Ring of Scribes

**XP Value:** 5,000 **GP Value:** 25,000

The runes inscribed on this band are characters from various written tongues of Faerûn, overlaid one upon the other. The ring has all the powers of a pair of rings of spell storing, containing two copies each of five commonly known spells that most wizards (foolishly) do not bother to memorize while adventuring: comprehend languages, erase, read magic, secret page, true seeing, and wizard mark. While this ring is worn, its wearer cannot be harmed by any magical effects caused by the discharge or activation of runes, glyphs, or symbols, or his or her reading of any writings or inscriptions.

### Ring of Stone

**XP Value:** 3,500 **GP Value:** 17,500

This band is graven with seven repetitions of the same rune, presumably meaning something akin to "earth" or "stone." Twice per day, the wearer of the ring of stone can call forth a stone shape spell from the ring. In addition, the ring may also change into a stone guardian once a week. Upon the mental command of its wearer, the ring vanishes from the finger it is worn on and reappears in front of the wearer (as close as available open space permits) as a maximum-strength stone guardian under the telepathic command of the ring wearer who summoned it. This particular stone guardian automatically detects invisibility and reflects back all fire-related magics 100% at their sources. Upon its summoner's mental command, its destruction, or the passage of 24 hours from the transformation, the guardian reverts to ring form, and the ring reappears on the summoner's finger.

### Ring of the Tshala

**XP Value:** 5,000 **GP Value:** 20,000

The runes on this band are surrounded by flowing outlines that suggest leaping flames. The ring wearer can call forth each of the following spells once per day, directing them as if she or he were a 20th-level wizard: flaming sphere, fireball, wall of fire, delayed blast fireball, and meteor swarm.

Every time a meteor swarm is called out of the ring, there is a 20% chance that the wearer is transformed into a greater firetail, known as a tshala. <sup>67</sup> The transformation lasts for a maximum of 10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>All detailed in the *Pages From the Mages* sourcebook—as are all spells not found in the *Player's Handbook* listed in this chapter, except as otherwise noted. <sup>65</sup>With maximum hit points.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup>At the option of the Dungeon Master, certain items possessed by the summoner may be left behind on such a journey.



rounds and can be reversed at will. However, at the end of each round or whenever the ring wearer wills himself or herself to change back, there is a 10% cumulative chance that the ring wearer is uncontrollably forced back into his or her original form while suffering the effects of a triple-strength *shroud of flame* spell (no saving throw allowed). This fiery effect continues until a successful *dispel magic* is cast upon the wearer by another being against 20th-level wizard magic (while the ring wearer is still alive) or the ring wearer is reduced to ashes—whereupon the ring teleports to a random location in Faerûn to await rediscovery. Only a *wish* spell brings anyone destroyed in this manner back to life.

It is believed that Mhzentul destroyed himself while trying to return from tshala form while using this ring during the Battle of the River Rising. The ring was not found after the battle, and Mhzentul's corpse was never recovered.

Ring Tshala (Greater Firetail): AC2; MV21 (B); HD 9+9; 81 hit points or wearer's own, whichever is greater; THAC0 12; #AT 4; Dmg ldl2 each attack (fire damage plus ignite flammable materials); SA heat (extra 1d12 damage on any one successful attack, once every 3 rounds), magic use as 14th-level mage: fireball 1/turn, plane shift (itself and 1d6 lesser firetails as a group), remove curse, heal, feeblemind, maze, fire trap—all 1/day; SD + 1 or greater weapons needed to hit; MR 90%; SZ S (4 feet long); ML as ring wearer; Int as ring wearer; AL as ring wearer; XP as ring wearer; MC11.

### Ring of Wayfaring

XP Value: 4,000 GP Value: 20,000

The runes inscribed on this band are joined by a continuous, winding line, and the ring possesses all the powers of a ring of spell storing, containing the spells find the path, Jhanifer's deliquescence, Quimby's enchanting gourmet, Spendelarde's chaser, Tulrun's tracer, and unseen servant. These spells can be called upon twice per day each, and operate as if the wearer were a 20th-level priest or wizard.

### Ring Spells 2nd Level

Moonfire (Wiz 2; Alteration)

Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: Up to one cubic foot per level of the caster

Saving Throw: None

This spell is a wizardly variant of the *moonfire* power conferred by Eilistraee on her priestesses. It was researched by several mages of Myth Drannor. The spell effect is identical to the priestesses' power save that it produces only a single manifestation of radiance.

Moonfire can range from a faint glow to a clear, bright (but not blinding) light, varying in hue as the caster desires through bluewhite, soft green, white, and silver. It cannot equal or exceed full sunlight (daylight) for purposes of fighting undead, but serves as a source of illumination for reading, finding one's way, and attracting others to a desired location. Moonfire does equal the strongest moonlight for natural and magical purposes.

Moonfire lasts for one round per level of its caster. Concentration is not required to maintain it, but it can be ended at any time by the summoner or by any application of *dispel magic* or *dark-ness*, which the *moonfire* negates during its own destruction.

Moonfire always appears to emanate from some part of the caster's body, but it can move about as the user wills. Wizards of 6th level or higher can cause moonfire to move away from their bodies altogether, drifting about in a manner akin to dancing lights. Moonfire moves about its caster's body as rapidly as desired, but when no longer in contact with the spellcaster it can drift in any direction and through the tiniest openings at a rate of up to 40 feet per round, as the caster wills. When the caster's concentration turns to other things, adrift moonfire hangs motionless, and does not continue in the direction it may have been moving. Moonfire can fill as large or small an area as the mage desires, up to the volume limits of one cubic foot per level of the caster.

The material component of this spell is a pinch of crushed moonstone sprinkled in the air in front of the spellcaster.

# 4Th Level Flamestrike (Wiz 4; Evocation)

Range: 10 vards/level

Components: V, S, M Duration: Special

Casting Time: 4 (1 round if set as a trap)

Area of Effect: One creature

Saving Throw: 1/2

This specialized fire spell can be used both as a direct attack and as a guardian trap. In either case, it affects one creature only, and its flames appear in a roaring spiral around the victim. A Flamsterd's flamestrike does 2d6 points of damage plus 1 point of damage per level of the caster and is a menace to clothing, carried items, and other flammable materials adjacent to the victim, requiring successful item saving throws vs. magical fire from them (or they are destroyed). Unlike a fireball, a Flamsterd's flamestrike does not explode outward to affect all beings in an area.

A Flamsterd's framestrike ruins any ongoing spellcasting its victim is attempting and endangers any unprotected accouterments (in the aforementioned manner). When used as a trap, a Flamsterd's flamestrike must be cast on a small piece of metal (typically a copper piece is used) and a series of specific triggering conditions equivalent to those of a magic mouth spell uttered over it. The trap is then set to activate when the conditions are met, a waiting spell that can be detected as magic but not as a trap. The conditions typically involve disturbing the focal item, and the Flamsterd's flamestrike can wait indefinitely until the conditions are fulfilled. The conditions cannot include anything involving detection of actions at a distance—in other words, casting a specific spell or entering an area—if the coin is not disturbed by doing so. If a dispel magic is cast on the focal object before it is disturbed or other conditions triggering the Flamsterds flamestrike are fulfilled, the flamestrike is dispersed without taking effect.

There is no time limit between casting and activation if a *Flamsterd's flamestrike* is set as a trap. If one or more beings fulfill the conditions of a set *Flamsterd's flamestrike*, the first one to do so is affected. If they do so simultaneously, the spell still affects only one being, and its target should be determined randomly.

The material components of this spell are a pinch of saltpeter, a pinch of iron filings, a piece of phosphorous, and a pinch of ashes. These are consumed in the casting, but any focal item that the spell may be trapping is not.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Detailed fully in the MC11 FORGOTTEN REALMS Appendix and the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume Three.



### Helm of Zulae

**XP Value:** 4,000 **GP Value:** 20,000

Zulae was court wizard to an elven lord of Evermeet. At his lord's request, Zulae created several magical helms sized to fit on the prow of an elven ship. These helms enabled the surface elves and their king to send their sailing ships beneath the waves to the lands of the sea elves so the elves could forge a treaty of peace between the races and freely trade thereafter. Zulae passed the secret of making these items on to several of his most trusted apprentices, who made a few more such helms, but it is thought that the process has long since been lost. All existing helms of Zulae are in the possession of the elven royal family of Evermeet except for one stored under magical guard in the elven kingdom of Synnoria in the heart of the isle of Gwynneth (of the Moonshae Isles).

A helm of Zulae appears as a silver battle helm with a full-face visor lacking eyeholes. A sleek, ribbed fin rises from the neckguard, sweeping along the midpoint crest of the helm from back to front like a fish fin. When placed over the head of the carved figurehead of a sailing ship, a helm of Zulae compels the ship to sink beneath the waves at a speed of approximately 5 knots (base and emergency movement rate of 6 miles per hour). The ship remains submerged once it descends completely under the water and ceases further downward movement, though it can be commanded to move forward at a speed of up to approximately 5 knots. A second rudder and a means of propulsion is necessary to further guide the ship up and down while underwater and another means of propulsion must be used to accelerate movement beyond 5 knots. The magic of the helm keeps the ship intact and holds all gear and cargo in place, even if such cargo would ordinarily float free of a sinking vessel.

While the *helm* is in place, a pocket of air in the inverted shape of the hull envelops the ship. This atmosphere remains breathable for a variable amount of time dependent on the size of the hull and the number of air-breathing creatures on board. A drakkar with 100 persons aboard would carry a large enough pocket to provide fairly fresh air for 12 continuous hours and increasingly stale air for an additional 12 hours. Even if a sailing ship returns to the surface, however, its air is not be refreshed until the *helm* is removed and at least 6 turns have elapsed thereafter (half that time if strong winds are blowing). Creatures on board or in the water around a ship bearing a *helm of Zulae* can freely poke through the air bubble without harm and without bursting the bubble.

If a submerged creature grasps a *helm of Zulae* and wills it to rise, it and any ship or solid item attached to, or touched by, a being touching the *helm* ascend through the waters at a rate of 5 knots, regardless of the mass or weight of items being raised. Continuous contact with the *helm* and concentration on rising will bring an unseaworthy vessel or even a waterlogged fragment of one to the surface and keep it afloat and headed in a direction of the *helm* commander's choosing. If a creature loses contact with the *helm*, or its concentration is broken, such travel and buoyancy cease unless the craft is seaworthy on its own; movement and buoyancy can be restored by regaining both contact and concentration. No specialized knowledge, words, or rituals are required to call on the powers of a *helm of Zulae*.

### Luck Medallion of Tymora

**XP Value:** 1,000 **GP Value:** 4,000

A *luck medallion* is a polished, unadorned disc of pure gold blessed by Tymora and hung on a thin golden chain. It is not unlike the holy symbols in the shape of silver discs priests of the goddess of luck wear around their necks.

When an *invisibility* spell or some superior variant of that spell is cast upon a *luck medallion*, the *medallion's* charm uses the magic of the spell to power a wide range of effects. Nothing can see, hear, smell, or magically scry any intelligent being within a radius of 30 feet of the *medallion*, as long it is not touched by any living being or moved. Detection spells targeted at creatures or objects protected by a *luck medallion* find traces of them in the wrong location and moving in the wrong direction.

A *luck medallion* crumbles to dust, its protection ended, 24 hours after its concealment power is awakened or when the concealment is broken by the movement of the *medallion* or the touch of a living being while it is active.

### Thunderstaff

**XP Value:** 5,000 **GP Value:** 30,000

Devised over a century ago by the archmage Baerom Thunderstaff I, patriarch of the Thunderstaff noble family of Waterdeep, the *thunderstaff* a potent item, and now at least a dozen staves of this sort are known to exist. (Baerom is also thought to have invented, or at least rediscovered, the 4th-level wizard spell *thunder staff*.) <sup>68</sup> At least one *thunderstaff* was given to Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun before Baerom's disappearance, although the Lord Mage of Waterdeep is said to have recently given it to his apprentice Arsten Thunderstaff II (Baerom's great-grandson). The whereabouts of the other *thunderstaves* is less certain.

A *thunderstaff* a 6-foot quarterstaff carved from the heart of an duskwood tree. The base is capped with a 3-inch-long mithral spike, allowing the staff to be used as a spear if so desired. The top is capped with a representation of a dragon's head forged in mithral. A sage versed in dragonlore could identify the head as a depiction of a blue dragon. The powers of a *thunderstaff* are activated (and deactivated) by silent act of will combined with direct physical contact. A thunderstaff can be used by any intelligent being capable of casting wizard spells.

Used as a quarterstaff or spear (with corresponding nonproficiency penalty, if applicable), a *thunderstaff* has an attack and damage bonus of +1 for every six levels of the wielder, with a maximum bonus of +5. In the hands of someone unable to cast wizard spells, it has no bonus. Hence, in the hands of a wizard or bard of levels 1 through 6, it acts as a *quarterstaff* +2 or *spear* +1. In the hands of a wizard or bard of levels 7 through 12, it acts as a *quarterstaff* +2 or *spear* +2.

A thunderstaff does not possess charges as is common for items of this sort. Instead a thunderstaff empowers a spellcaster to funnel spell energy contained in memorized spells into creating one of the staff's effects—specific magics determined at the time of the thunderstaffs—creation.

At least as many memorized spell levels, in any combination, must be sacrificed as the level of effect to be generated. For example, to generate a 3rd-level spell effect, a spellcaster could sacrifice one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>Detailed in the Tome of Magic accessory.



memorized 3rd-level spell, one 1st-level spell and one 2nd-level spell, two 2nd-level spells, or one 5th-level spell. (Extra spell levels are wasted, and cannot be saved.) Only one spell effect per round can be generated, and a spell effect can only be generated if the wielder can cast spells of that level. (Hence a wizard must be of at least 5th level before he can generate a 3rd-level spell effect.)

Creating spell effects also requires a period of attunement. A spellcaster must touch, carry, or keep a *thunderstaff* within 10 feet of his or her person at all times for at least one week before becoming attuned to it. This proximity requirement ceases once attunement is attained. A *thunderstaff* can only be attuned to one spellcaster at a time. If a new owner becomes attuned, the prior owner's attunement fades, and the process must begin again.

To employ higher-level spell effects, the attunement process lengthens proportionately. The required period of attunement is equal in weeks to the level of spell effect desired to be employed. A wizard cannot become attuned to spell effects of levels she or he cannot yet cast. To do so requires beginning the period of attunement again. Once attunement is achieved, a wizard immediately becomes aware of all the spell effects currently available. For example, a 6th-level wizard could use a 2nd-level spell effect after two weeks of attunement. He could not use a 3rd-level spell effect until after a total of three weeks of attunement. If a year later he achieves 7th level, he could not use a 4th-level spell effect until seven weeks later, but during that time he could still use 3rd and lower level spell effects.

A *thunderstaff* can create nine distinct spell effects determined at the time of its creation, one for each level of wizard spells. The roster of spells available for the various thunderstaves in existence is thought to vary widely, although most have something to do with thunder, lightning and weather. All have the spell thunderstaff as their 4th-level effect, as this was Baerom's signature spell. All spell effects issue forth from the staff's dragon mouth, occur on contact with the staff (such as *shocking grasp*), or occur in an area of effect centered on the *thunderstaff* as appropriate. Although a *thunderstaff* must be physically touched while unleashing a spell effect, it can be released while the spell is in effect (an important property when casting spells such as *lightning rod*).

Khelben's records<sup>69</sup> indicate that the *thunderstaff* now possessed by Arsten Thunderstaff II commands the following spell effects: shocking grasp, stinking cloud, lightning reflection, thunder staff cone of cold, control weather, lightning snake, lightning ring, and (blue) dragonshape. Other thunderstaves might employ different storm-related or electrical spells, including: ball lighting, chain lightning, hailcone, insulation, lightning bug, lightning rod, lightning storm, tempestcone, thunderlance, and web of lightning.

### Thunderstaff Spells

### 1st Level

Insulation (Wiz 1; Abjuration, Alteration)

Range: Touch Components: V, S, M Casting Time: 1

Duration: 2 rounds/level Area of Effect: Creature touched

Saving Throw: None

This spell provides the caster with a temporary resistance to all electrical effects or spells. The recipient of the spell gains a +3 bonus to saving throws against such attack forms, and all damage actually sustained is reduced by half (round damage down, but not below 1 point). Thus, if the effect allows a saving throw and if the saving throw is failed, me protected creature sustains one-half damage, and if the saving throw is successful, only one-quarter damage is sustained.

The material component must be placed between the recipient's foot (shod or unshod) and the ground and stood on. It must be touched by the recipient at all times during the spell duration or the spell is ineffective (though not terminated). If conditions are wet—in other words, the recipient is standing in water or in a thunderstorm—the bonus on the saving throw is reduced to +1. The resistance to damage is unchanged.

The material component of this spell is a l-inch-square piece of rubber.

Lightning Bug (Wiz 1; Alteration, Evocation)

Range: 15 yards+ 10 yards/level

Components: V,S Casting Time: 1

Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1 creature or target

Saving Throw: None

This spell was invented by Gemidan of Waterdeep and is generally only known to him, Khelben, Laeral, the Waterdeep mages' guild, and members of the city watch. Merging *magic missile* with *shocking grasp*, this spell allows its casters to generate a missile of electrical energy and cast it unerringly at a target. When it hits the target (or an electrical conductor that touches an opponent's body), the *lightning bug* discharges 1d6 points of damage plus 1 point per level of the wizard (to a maximum of 15th level). (For example, an 11th-level mage would generate an electrical missile of 1d6+ 11 points of damage.)

### 3rd Level

Lightning Rod (Wiz 3; Alteration) Reversible

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 7
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: One object
Saving Throw: None

This spell forces magical lightning to a specific spot determined by the caster. When cast, the wizard touch a metal object to become the lightning rod (a sword, a lamppost, or a gold piece). The focal point of the spell cannot be alive or heavier than 100 pounds. When any ranged electrical attacks occur within 150 feet of something affected by *lightning rod*, the energy is redirected and absorbed into that object, negating the attack and destroying the object. If someone is in contact with a item affected by *lightning rod*, that person receives the full damage of the attack. Unless an item affected by *lightning rod* is struck by a *lightning bolt*, a *lightning bug spell*, or other magical electricity, the spell lasts for up to 48 hours.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Volo: Nevermind how I gained access to them.

Elminster: The presence in the thunderstaff of lightning reflection and lightning ring indicates that its maker had an extended friendship with at least one of the Seven Sisters, as those two spells were invented by them. (Those two spells are also detailed in The Seven Sisters game accessory hailcone and thunderlance are also found in Pages From the Mages, lightning snake is new, and the other spells are repeated here as drawn from disparate sources for the reader's convenience.)



#### 4th Level

**Hailcone** (Viz 4; Evocation) Range: 10 yards/level

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 1 round

Area of Effect: 30-foot diameter cone

Saving Throw: None

The spellcaster causes large hailstones (2 inches across and greater) to rain down in a conical area from a point 30 feet above a surface or target downward in a cone that opens to a 30-foot base diameter. Creatures within this area of effect suffer 3d10 points of damage, and any exposed items must make a successful item saving throw vs. crushing blow to avoid being damaged or destroyed (DM's discretion).

If the spell is cast in midair, there is a danger zone up to 30 feet below the broad base of the cone. Creatures in this area take 1d10 points of damage, and items that are fragile and exposed must make a successful item saving throw vs. crushing blow or be damaged. Creatures beneath the danger zone might be struck by odd hailstones and thus become aware of the spell's effect, but these hailstones have no appreciable force and inflict no damage.

The material components of the hailcone are a pinch of dust and a few drops of water.

### Nautical Ball Lightning (Wiz 4; Conjuration)

Range: 60 yards
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: 1 ball per 5 levels

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell creates one ball of lightning for every 5 levels of the caster. Each ball can be sent to a different target, and balls of lightning are usually targeted at the members of a ship's crew. A ball of lightning is 2 feet in diameter and flies through the air at to strike its target at a movement rate of 24. Once it impacts its target, whether the target, it moves rapidly along nearby surfaces in random directions: up masts, along decks, down ladders, and so forth, at a movement rate of 12. If it moves within 15 feet of another living being, it "chases" that being until it strikes this new target, and then begins random movement until it acquires a new target, continuing this cycle until it becomes stuck at a certain location, such as the top of a mast or at the end of a yardarm (10% chance rolled each round after the first if the ball's current location indicates the possibility), or the spell's duration ends.

A ball of lightning inflicts 1 point of damage per level of the spellcaster each time it touches a living creature. It automatically strikes a living creature who is its initial target, provided the target cannot outrun it; if it acquires new targets after the first, it automatically strikes them if its movement and theirs could intersect in a given round. If a ball becomes stuck at a certain spot, the lightning starts a small fire on a roll of 5 or 6 on 1d6. Creatures at that same location take 1 point of damage per level of the spellcaster each round they are in contact with the ball.

Thunderlance (Wiz 4; Evocation)

Range: 0 Components: V, S, M Casting Time: 4

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged

Area of Effect: Caster Saving Throw: None

Upon casting this spell, a faint, gray, shimmering force comes into being in the general shape of a staff or spear. The force can extend up to 20 feet from the caster's pointed finger and retract or grow to the desired size, but it always remains a straight lance of force. Any creature which touches or is touched by the thunderlance takes 4d6 points of damage. The lance discharges with a loud clap of thunder (but the noise does no damage).

Once so discharged, the *thunderlance* fades out of existence. The *thunderlance* can also be willed out of existence by the caster at any time without hitting anyone. The *thunderlance* disappears without inflicting any damage if the caster dies, loses consciousness, or casts any other spells. Full conscious control is not necessary to command the *thunderlance*, allowing the caster to move and fight normally while carrying the lance.

The lance can be used as a barrier or a trap against attacking creatures, but it is most often used as a weapon. The lance attacks creatures at their lowest unarmored Armor Class (a dragon would still be AC 2 but a mounted knight would be AC 10). Any non-innate armor is ignored, but Dexterity and magical bonuses do apply to the target's Armor Class.

The touch of a *thunderlance* destroys a *shield* spell, a *wall of force, a minor globe of invulnerability,* and similar, minor abjuration magics of 5th level or less. Higher level abjuration spells are unaffected by the *thunderlance*. In either case, the *thunderlance* is discharged and fades upon striking such a magical barrier. A *thunderlance* can pass through fire and water (including ice) unharmed, even if the fire, water, or ice is the result of a spells.

As a bonus, the thunderlance absorbs magic missiles directed at the wielder. For every magic missile so absorbed, the lance inflicts 1d4+1 additional points of damage when discharged. The *thunderlance* can absorb and then discharge one magic missile for every three levels of the caster. Additional magic missiles are absorbed but do not increase its discharge

"Magic missiles" include other spells with similar properties, such as *major missile* and *Snilloc's snowball*. Each of these spells, if absorbed in the *thunderlance*, adds 1d4+1 more points of damage to the *thunderlance*, regardless of the typical damage of the spell.

The material component of this spell is a small, silver spear.

### 5th Level

Lightning Reflection (Wiz 5; Abjuration, Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Duration: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 1 being
Saving Throw: None

This spell protects the caster or a touched recipient (and all worn or carried material) against all effects of electrical and lightning energy discharges; it also protects against magic missiles. All



such attacks are reflected straight back at their sources for full normal effect. Magical or natural lightning and other raw energy discharges are protected against. Fire is not protected against.

The material components of the spell are a drop of quicksilver and a shard of metal of any size.

#### 7th Level

Lightning Snake (Wiz 7; Evocation)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 4 rounds

Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: ½

This spell causes a crawling, flickering bolt of lightning 5 feet wide to emerge from the caster's body and streak away in a straight line 90 feet in whatever direction the caster wills. It then turns (as the caster directs) to travel in a straight line in another direction for another 90 feet and the round ends. The *lightning snake* turns again to begin its next round of journeying and turns turn once more halfway through that second round, repeating this mode of travel for a third and fourth round before expiring. Contact with a *lightning snake* deals all creatures 10d6 points of damage per round (save for half damage). An item that saves against a snake is immune to all damage from it, but a creature takes damage for each round in which it is struck by the same snake.

The first rush of a *lightning snake* cannot miss, but the caster must roll 1d10 for all other chosen turns. A result of 1-3 or 8-10 means the snake travels precisely as the caster intends, but a result of 7 through 10 means it veers. Consult the Scatter Diagram in the DUNGEON MASTER *Guide* under "Grenadelike Missiles," and match the roll to the paths indicated by 4, 5, 6, or 7 on that diagram, treating the 8-10 line as the intended path of the snake. There is one immunity to veering: The caster can unerringly cause the snake to rebound 180° back upon itself. Note that this spell could well harm friends of the caster—though the caster, along with any worn, carried, or touched items, is never harmed by contact with his or her own *lightning snake*.

The material components of this spell are a piece of bent wire or a bent nail or pin, a piece of amber, a bit of fur, and a scrap of metal of any sort that has previously been struck by lightning.

#### 8th Level

Lightning Ring (Wiz 8; Evocation)

Range: 10 feet/level Components: V, S, M Casting Time: 8

Duration: 8 rounds (or 1 round)

Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: ½

This spell surrounds the caster with a bright white, crackling, chest-high ring of lightning. The ring moves with the caster, who can cast other spells without harming the ring's functioning after the round in which the ring is established. While encircled by the ring, the caster is immune to damage from all lightning attacks.

Twice per round, the ring can emit a lightning bolt that streaks straight outward in a direction chosen by the caster. (The bolt rebounds at an angle chosen by the DM if it strikes something solid

and nonliving.) Such bolts are 5 feet wide and 80 feet long and cause 8d6 points of damage to all creatures in their path. If creatures who are struck make a successful saving throw vs. spell, they suffer only half damage.

Alternatively, this spell can be cast to discharge all at once. The ring forms in one round, spinning about the caster (who is protected against all lightning damage for that round), then rises straight up and fires eight lightning bolts at once at up to eight different targets chosen by the caster. In doing so, the spell exhausts itself. The bolts do the same damage and have the same dimensions as those cast by the continuing-duration version of the spell.

The material components of this spell are a ring of any size fashioned of glass and a bit of fur from any animal.

**Lightning Storm** (Wiz 8; Evocation)

Range: 40 yards +10 yards/level

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 8
Duration: 1 round

Area of Effect: 70-foot-diameter sphere

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell creates electrical discharges within a spherical area. Bolts of lightning leap repeatedly about within this area, regardless of the presence or location of metal, water, or other conductors. All beings within this area take 6d12 points of damage unless they are immune to electrical damage, and all items must make an item saving throw vs. electricity. The spell prevents lightning from traveling along normal conductive paths out of spell range. People in full armor or bathers in a moat located just outside the spell's area of effect are unharmed.

Casters of a lightning storm are always unharmed by the spell, even if they stand in the center of the effect. They are also unharmed by any other electrical attacks or effects during the spell's duration.

The material components of this spell are a shard of glass, a scrap of fur, a piece of silver, and a flint.

Web of Lightning (Wiz 8; Evocation, Alteration)

Range: 40 yards +10 yards/level

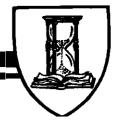
Components: V, S, M Casting Time: 8

Duration: Instantaneous Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: ½

This spell causes the simultaneous discharge of six lightning bolts. Identical in properties to those bolts created by a *lightning bolt* spell except that they may not be forked, these bolts do 7d6 points of damage each and manifest in one of two ways.

One manifestation is widely used on battlefields: a starburst of six bolts radiating out from a single point visualized or chosen directly by the caster, who need not see its location. Four bolts spring out in the cardinal directions (forming an equal-armed cross), and two additional bolts leap out in two of the diagonals in quadrants chosen by the caster.

The other manifestation of the spell is a ricocheting web within a 60-foot-diameter sphere. The sphere can be altered to fill a 30-foot by 30-foot room or smaller area but not increased in volume. Compressing it does not affect damage or other spell properties.



This effect is often fit into a single doorway, with the bolts leaping from the frame as an intruder steps through.

In either manifestation, target beings must make saving throws individually against all six bolts They save against fewer bolts if the path of a bolt leaves them out of harm's way, as in most uses of the starburst.

The material components of this spell are four lodestones or a bit of fur, and a small, smooth rod of amber, crystal, or glass.

### 9th Level

Dragonshape (Wiz 9; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 9
Duration: Special

Area of Effect: Person touched

Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster or another being to take the form of a type of dragon the caster has personally seen. A specific individual dragon *cannot* be mimicked, including avatars of dragon deities. The spell can be cast on any person of 15th or higher level. Unless the person shares one alignment (ethos or moral) with the dragon form selected, the spell fails.

The person acquires all the powers of that type of dragon, including but not limited to innate spell-like abilities, immunities, magic resistance, breath weapon, fear aura, senses, movement, Armor Class, THAC0, and all physical abilities. Any age category up to adult can be chosen by the caster. An individual affected by the spell retains his or her own Intelligence, but cannot cast any of his or her own memorized spells while in dragon form (though dragon spell abilities may become available). The person's own racial or magical abilities do not function in dragon form.

All items that are worn or carried temporarily become part of the dragon form; they cannot be used and have no effect while the person is in dragon form. Items that have been set aside can be worn or used by the dragon, so long as they can be used by the dragon (that is, manipulated with altered speech, claws, and so on—further, the item must either change size or be easily adapted to the dragon form).

The number of Hit Dice the dragon form has depends on the age and type of dragon. The change to dragon form requires a roll for hit points unique to the particular casting, which is not adjusted for Constitution or other factors. A character slain in dragon form remains a (dead) dragon. Parts taken from a slain dragonshaped individual spoil any magical operation they are used for.

Changing back to normal form can be done by the recipient at will and takes only a second; this ends the spell. Otherwise, the spell lasts one turn per caster level. The recipient's remaining hit points after the change are proportional to the dragon form's remaining hit points (round fractions up). The individual must make a successful system shock check immediately after the change or be incapacitated for a full day.

Each time after the first that the spell is cast within any 10-day period, a system shock check to avoid death is required for the caster. Also, the recipient likewise checks upon each change, from human to dragon and from dragon to human, if the change to dragon form is made more than once in any 10-day period.

At the DM's option, mastering a dragon power sufficiently to use it in combat may require 1d3 rounds if the recipient is unused to

the shape of the particular dragon. Except for purely physical abilities such as flying, biting, and breathing, unmastered powers, including draconic combat maneuvers, cannot be used effectively. Furthermore, to equal the skill of a true dragon in the use of draconic powers requires more practice than the duration of the spell easily provides.

The material component is an incisor tooth from a great wyrm of the dragon type whose shape the recipient will assume. If available for sale at all, these might be had for 2,000 gp to 20,000 gp each, depending on the type and rarity of the dragon.

Tempestcone (Wiz 9; Alteration, Evocation)

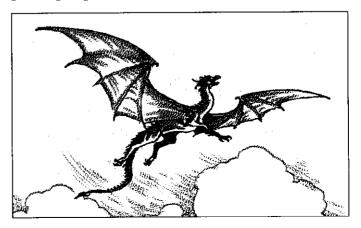
Range: Touch Components: V, S Casting Time: 9

Duration: 1 round/level Area of Effect: One creature Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a shadowy, upright cone of force surrounding one creature touched by the caster (which can be the caster). The cone comes to a point a few feet above the recipient's head and extends to the floor (or, if the caster is flying, falling, or otherwise removed from a solid surface, to just below the lowest part of the caster's body). The tempestcone moves with the recipient and seems to be a faintly shrieking, tumultuous chaos of whirling winds and shadowy clouds, Its only effect is to "drink" all magic coming into contact with it, including magical item charges expended and spells cast by the caster it is protecting, and transform them into magic missiles.

The recipient of a tempestcone is unharmed by the whirling cone of winds and is unaffected by all incoming spell effects; the magic missiles created by a tempestcone whirl around the cone until hurled unerringly at targets within 140 feet by the being enveloped by the cone. The protected creature can hurl the missiles even if it is not a spellcaster; a mental command is all that is needed. The missiles are identical in all respects to those created by a magic missile spell.

A tempest cone creates two magic missiles per spell level absorbed, each doing 1d4+1 points of damage and flying unerringly toward their target at MV 24 (A). If the projectiles pass more than 140 feet from the cone or are unused when the spell expires, they fade away harmlessly. Magical item discharges for which no spell equivalent exists are considered 6th level for purposes of generating magic missiles.









# The Magic of Movement



he desire to fly has seized the imaginations of humans, elves, and probably other intelligent nonflying creatures down through the ages, and many a spell, enchanted item, or mechanical contraption has attempted to give at least a few moments of aerial

swooping to beings who must spend their lives trudging upon the ground. Priests and wizards have long ago devised or discovered faster ways of travel than flying: magics of various sorts that jump from one place to another in Faerûn or even from one plane to another. Many of these are well known in story, song, and fable (if not in personal experience) to most folk in Faerûn who have ever sat back in a tavern with their ears open and their tankard not yet empty, so there is no need for an exhaustive exploration here of things astral, ethereal, or dimensional.

What is more useful (and so, of course, provided here<sup>1</sup>) is a brief farrago of spells and notes on the topic of moving folk or their things about that have been gathered during my travels among the mages of Faerûn. Wards and other prohibitions on movement are discussed in The Magic of Guardianship chapter unless such barriers themselves involve magical movement.

# Some Collected Notes and Thoughts

It has long been known that mages can render an area unreachable by teleportation through use of the popular *proof from teleportation* spell<sup>2</sup> and more powerful variant magics, but I have managed to learn of an item that accomplishes much the same thing (the *weirdstone*, detailed at the end of this chapter), and of a priests' magic, *sacrosanct*, that also wards away dimensionally traveling items and beings.

I have also learned—at the cost of a very narrow escape, I might add—that certain unscrupulous wizards can send undead creatures across half Faerûn to attack their foes by means of teleportational spells; that at least one of the Red Wizards of Thay has developed some sort of transposition spell that plucks a desired item from one place and sends a worthless or dangerous item to occupy the same place; and that other wizards are experimenting with something called a *runic teleport* spell that enables nonspell-casters to jump from place to place within Faerûn by stepping in the appropriate mystic circle after drawing some sort of destination rune in a smaller, linked area.<sup>3</sup>

# Movement Magics

Here follow some of the useful magics I have acquired in a career that seems to have involved more than my share of fleeing headlong through the Realms!

## Wizard Spells

3rd Level

Teleport Object (Wiz 3; Alteration)

Range: 0 Components: V, S, M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: One small item

Saving Throw: Special

This spell transports small, nonliving items to other locales in Faerûn. The caster touches the object, which must not be tethered or in the grasp of another being, while making a gesture with one hand. The material component of the spell vanishes, consumed by the spell—and the object is whisked away to any location on the same plane.

Items to be teleported may be of any volume, so long as they are not undead and do not exceed a weight of 1d3 ounces plus one ounce per level of the caster. Magical items are allowed an item saving throw vs. lightning to avoid being affected, and any bonuses the item has work to modify the roll. If this saving throw succeeds or if an ineligible or too heavy item is chosen as the target of the spell, the magic does not function, but the spell is not lost.

Magical item functions do not operate as the magic transports them, so they cannot let fly when they arrive at their new location. Any items on fire when transported by this spell are extinguished en route. Only single items may be affected by this spell: If a caster attempts to move a bag of small items (such as gems, coins, or keys) the items will remain, and the bag alone—intact and still fastened closed if it began the journey that way—makes the trip.

Items affected by a teleport object spell always arrive safely without falling or striking other solids. They arrive gently on a surface, not inside a foe, a container, or body of water. The caster can only send objects to a destination she or he has personally visited or seen either first-hand, through a familiar, or using scrying magic or a scrying item. The arrival is always safe, but there is a 20% base chance that the object arrives d100 feet away from its intended resting place, with the following cumulative modifiers: -12% if the intended destination is very familiar to the caster, +10% if the destination has altered since the caster last viewed it, +15% if the caster has only seen the spot once or twice, -1% for every 5 gp of value of the material component above 25 gp, and -2% per level of the caster above 10th. The object may arrive on a higher or lower surface than intended, anywhere in a 100-foot-radius spherical area around the desired place of arrival; its direction away from that desired spot can be determined by use of the Scatter Diagram (under "Grenadelike Missiles" in the DUNGEON MASTER Guide). If a solid object or active magical effect occupies the intended place of arrival or the actual spot the object heads for, it is deflected an additional d100 feet in a random direction, but arrives safely. Note that the caster is not made aware of where the object actually ends up when it is sent.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Elminster: Harrumph. That "of course" is not nearly as slyly slid in as Volo would like to think. There's no "of course" in anything the rogue does! <sup>2</sup> As this spell appears in the Pages Prom the Mages accessory, Volo's copy of it has been omitted here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The teleport dead spell has also been omitted because of its inclusion in Pages From the Mages, but the runic teleport does not appear here because Volo was not able to gain access to a complete, workable copy of the spell. Elminster assures us that it does exist—and that adventurers should always beware strange-looking writings on the ground.



Written messages can readily be sent by means of this spell. If two wizards cast *teleport object* spells together, two items can be sent to exactly the same place and to arrive together, spatially oriented just as they were when they left the casters. (To determine just where they arrive, use the better percentage chance of the two castings.)

The material component of this spell is a clear or translucent, naturally faceted gemstone (in other words, a crystal, not a cut jewel) of not less than 25 gold pieces in value.

### 5th Level

Arrow Swarm (Wiz 5; Alteration, Evocation)

Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: A 90-foot-long cone with a 45-foot-diameter base

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell transforms a single nonmagical arrow, which must be fired from a bow by a person other than the caster as the caster touches the arrow and intones the incantation, into a deadly cone of arrowfire that emerges from extradimensional space somewhere else in Faerûn, at a time of the caster's choosing. The arrow vanishes when the spell is cast and is consumed by the spell, which creates two short-lived duplicates of the arrow for each experience level of the caster up to 15th level. These arrows cannot be poisoned or aflame, nor can they carry a disease or any other magic aside from the spell they are a part of—such as a curse—even if the original arrow did.

These multiple magical arrows do 1d6 damage each, but when striking, they race about like excited minnows in a school, passing through organic material rather than striking and staying, and darting about with many changes of direction rather than flying once and then falling. At the end of two rounds of such swirling, they fade away, but until then they occupy a conical area expanding out 90 feet from an unseen point of origin, widening 5 feet in diameter for every 10 feet from the point of the cone. (In other words, the cone is 5 feet in diameter 10 feet from the point of origin, 10 feet in diameter 20 feet from the point of origin, 15 feet in diameter 30 feet from the point of origin, etc.) This area of flight cannot pass through walls, ceilings, floors, or other solid, continuous inorganic barriers, and so can be constricted by surroundings. Constricted or not, the cone of arrows does the same damage: All living creatures in the cone must make a successful saving throw vs. spell at -2 or be struck by all arrows; those who successfully save are struck by only half the arrows.

When this spell is cast, the caster chooses the spot where its point of origin will take effect, which must be no more than 12 feet above a spot on the same plane where the caster has physically stood within the last 24 hours, and the general direction of the cone (either as a compass direction plus up or down, or toward a known feature such as a door, table, or "the large open end of the room"). The caster also decides if the spell will take effect instantly or be programmed.

If the latter choice is made, the spell is governed by a set of conditions enunciated aloud during casting—conditions with the same limitations as a *magic mouth* spell. The presence of a known, named individual or magical item, either unique or one of a type, can be part of the trigger conditions.

Programmed arrow swarms have waited undetected for years before suddenly appearing and erupting, but they cannot pass

through or form within a *minor globe of invulnerability* or any more powerful magical barrier, and do not trigger if their programmed conditions are met when such an effect is present at their designated point of origin. A *dispel magic* cast on the point of origin or a properly worded *limited wish* or *wish* spell destroys an *arrow swarm* without triggering it.

The material component for this spell is one flight arrow.

### 6th Level

Dimensional Thrust (Wiz 6; Alteration)

Range: 3 yards/level

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: One being Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell transports a single being (who may be unwitting or hostile) a short distance in a desired direction. Arrival is always precise and safe but may place the transported being in a trap, prison, or other peril. Unwilling targets are entitled to a saving throw vs. spell. If the saving throw is successful, the target is not effected, and the spell is wasted. If the saving throw is failed, the spell takes effect as described below.

The caster must be able to see the target creature as the spell is cast; the spell range refers to how distant that creature can be for the spell to work, not how far it can be moved. The caster need not touch the target, and casting is a simple matter of making a gesture while concentrating on the intended destination, which must be within 150 yards of the target creature and can either be a specific locale (for example, a room) that the caster has previously viewed or been in or an unknown spot that is approximately a specific distance and compass direction distant from where the target is now. If the chosen destination is a body of water, the magic relocates the target away from it, but it can place the target high on a mountain ledge or pinnacle or at the depths of a well or ravine—so long as a dry, solid surface can be found to land on and the 150-yard distance of travel is not exceeded.

### 7th Level

Mass Teleport (Wiz 7; Alteration)

Range: 3 yards
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: One being per level of the caster within 3 yards of

the caster

Saving Throw: Special

This spell instantly transports one being per level of the caster (one of whom may be the caster) to another locale on Toril. Beings to be transported must be within 10 feet of the caster; they may touch of the caster if they desire, but need not do so. In addition to themselves, transportees may take with them all clothing and gear up to a weight limit equal to their nude body weight. (If a being is carrying too much, determine what gets left behind randomly.)

The caster makes a percentile roll, modified by -1% for every passenger that is not the caster and consults the table given in the DUNGEON MASTER *Guide* under the *teleport* spell to determine if arrival is safe or not. A single roll governs the entire transported party: A "high" result confers falling damage upon them all, and a "low" result either places transportees safely in a lower room or



cavern or brings them into contact with something solid, If the latter result occurs, each transportee must make a saving throw vs. spell. If the saving throw is failed, the transportee is slain and his or her body then rebounded back to the spot where she or he was standing when the *mass teleport* was cast. If the saving throw is successful, the being is instead flung to a random destination elsewhere in Faerûn to land safely with all his or her gear, but without any companions nearby.

### 8th Level

Teleport Fireball (Wiz 8; Alteration)

Range: 10 miles/level

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 20-foot-radius sphere

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell creates a *fireball* (dealing 1d6 points of damage per level of the caster up to 10th level) akin to that created by the 3rd-level wizard spell *fireball*, except that it appears and detonates at another location within spell range. The table given in the DUNGEON MASTER *Guide* under the *teleport* spell is then consulted to determine if arrival is safe or not. "Low" results means the spell is wasted and takes no effect, and "high" results form and burst above the intended *fireball* location. Otherwise, the *fireball* is on target. Creatures caught in the area of effect are allowed a saving throw vs. spell to take only half damage; all items within reach of the fiery burst must also make item saving throws vs. magical fire.

The material components of this spell are a pinch of saltpeter, a piece of phosphorous, and a pinch of iron filings.

### 9th Level

Waethra's Warm Welcome

(Wiz 9; Abjuration, Alteration, Evocation)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 2 rounds

Area of Effect: A sphere with a radius of 10 feet/level of the

caster

Saving Throw: Special

This spell protects an area that is outlined by a flickering spell glow during the spell's casting, but the glow fades upon the spell's completion. The protected area is spherical, centered on the caster, and has a radius of 10 feet per level of the caster. Once the casting is complete, this designated area intercepts all intruding beings (other than the caster) who are employing magic or psionics that allow them to travel astrally, travel ethereally, or translocate (in other words, *teleport*, *dimension door*, and the like) as they enter and returns them to where they began their journey by a roundabout way. One being per level of the caster can be given a *warm welcome* before the spell is exhausted. The *welcome* does not allow intruders to see into or release anything into the protected area before it whisks them away.

Intruders are first transported into an extradimensional space whose darkness is lit only by countless whirling *magic missile* like energy bolts. They fall through this area for one round and must make a saving throw vs. spell four times. For each failure, roll 1d8; the result is how many bolts strike the intruding being. Each bolt bursts on contact, doing 1d4+1 points of damage.



Keldrick Minniver experiences Waethra's Warm welcome.

The intruding being then falls out of the void of bolts to a location 70 feet above where its journey first began. (In other words, if they traveled by various means or over several days to reach the area protected by the *warm welcome*, its magic returns them to the place where they first set out on that journey from, not merely to the beginning of its last stage.) This location may even be on another plane from the protected area. Arrival above the spot where an intruding beings journey began is always safe; it may be shifted up, down, or sideways some distance to avoid arriving in solid objects (such as the roof of a building or the ceiling of a chamber), but its arrival is always into empty air. Unless the intruder can fly or avoid damage by magical means (such as a *feather fall* spell), falling damage (7d6 points worth) then applies.

The spell's material components are a strand of spiderweb, two daggers, the eye of a phase spider, and two drops of the ichor of an astral dreadnought (see the  $PLANESCAPE^{TM}$  Monstrous Compendium Appendix II).

# Priest Spells

5th Level

Blaenther's Bowls (Pr 5; Alteration)

Sphere: Summoning
Range: 20 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level



Casting Time: 1 round Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: Special

This spell creates a dimensional linkage between two surfaces, each of which must be smaller in surface area than the caster's body and separated by no more than 100 feet per level of the caster after the spell is cast. (The surfaces must be within 20 yards when the spell is first cast.) The caster must have touched both surfaces with his or her bare flesh at some time before the spell is cast, but how long ago is immaterial.

This spell, devised long ago by Blaenther Oldryn, a priest of Waukeen, teleports small nonliving items placed on one surface to the other. Blaenther used this spell as most priests do today: to whisk coin offerings from a bowl to an inner area and to send scrolls, weapons, and needed items to clergy members stationed by the bowl as requested (by prewritten notes dropped into the bowl or by rung gongs).

Items must be able to fit totally upon or within the enchanted surfaces to be transported. Each surface can send one item per round to the other, and a particular *Haenther's bowls* spell can only affect send an item one way; it must be picked up and set down again on the destination surface to return to its origination surface. When dealing with the sequence of items to be transported, the first item to be placed on a surface is transported first. If many items are on a surface, the one that has been there longest is transported before the others; for items with identical seniority, randomly determine which moves. Items that are too large are unaffected, as are those that are being held onto by a living or dead being. Living or undead substances touching the linked surfaces are unaffected by the spell. Either linked surface can be moved about without breaking the magic, so long as the two never pass more than 100 feet per level of the caster apart.

The spell's material components are a pinch of gold dust, a spiral of fine wire, and a carved ivory or bone arrow of any size with an arrowheads at both ends.

### 7th Level

Sacrosanct (Pr 7; Abjuration, Alteration)

Sphere: Guardian

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 day/level
Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: A sphere with a radius of 10 feet/caster's level

Saving Throw: None

This spell is commonly used to keep unauthorized persons out of temple vaults and holy areas. It protects an area that is outlined by a radiant glow during the spell's casting, but the glow fades upon the spell's completion. The protected area is spherical, centered on the caster, and has a radius of 10 feet per level of the caster. Once the casting is complete, this designated area intercepts all intruding beings (other than the caster) who are employing magic or psionics that allow them to travel astrally, travel ethereally, or translocate (in other words, *teleport*, *dimension door*, and the like) as they enter the area, prohibiting them from seeing into or introducing anything into the immobile area and redirecting them to a random location elsewhere in Faerûn.

The redirected being always reaches this new destination safely. It cannot be chosen by the caster of the sacrosanct, but it is viewed by everyone in the protected area — all of whom also receive a general

idea of its distance and direction—as the redirected being reaches it. A clear, detailed, but translucent image of the would-be intruder—or rather, the outward form of that being, which may be a disguise—is also displayed to all beings in the protected area as this occurs.

The material components of this spell are a piece of rubber, a small mirror or reflective item, and the eye of an owl or other creature able to see in dim light.

### Magical Items

Weindstone

XP Value: 25,000 GP Value: 65,000

This rare item looks like a fist-sized, faceted diamond. If set upon any solid, level surface, it floats upward to stop 3 feet above the surface, emitting chiming sounds at random times and glowing with a pulsing, white, internal radiance. The stone is actually a cut-glass construct, but it emits a powerful effect. A weirdstone prohibits all phasing, ethereal states, translocational magics (such as teleport, pass plant, and dimension door), scrying and divination magics, and astral travelers from occurring within, entering into, or looking into, a 6-mile radius of it. This prohibition includes psionics, spell-like abilities, and natural creature powers, such as the abilities of phase spiders and xorn. The spherical area of effect extends overhead and underground when the weirdstone is activated; the area is simply closed off.

A *weirdstone* can be deactivated by the touch of the being who activated it, who may seize and place it in a pouch or on an irregular surface, whereupon it is deactivated. A *weirdstone* can also be deactivated by breaking it. A successful strike against AC 2 upon it results in it having to make an item saving throw vs. crushing blow; if it succeeds it is unaffected, but failure means it is destroyed.

### Wonderful Throne

**XP Value:** 20,000 **GP Value:** 90,000

This rare item appears as a plain stone chair of the sort sculpted in scores by dwarves for human patrons in elder days. It is often hidden among a row or cluster of identical, nonmagical chairs. A *wonderful throne* bears no identifying mark, but it exhibits many faint enchantments when examined with a detect magic spell.

Anyone who sits on a *wonderful throne* for six hours or more at a time (contact must be continuous, but the sitting being may shift about and may be asleep or awake) begins to see mental visions of some of the places reachable by the throne. It is only while seeing such visions that a seated being may hope (by means of powerful divination spells) to gain some hint of the command word of a specific *wonderful throne*. (Very few of these items have known command words; those that do survive are almost all preserved in diaries or wizard's workbooks.)

The command word of a *wonderful throne* causes it to instantly transport itself and any beings touching it or seated upon it, any items touching the throne or beings in contact with it, and the air immediately surrounding the throne, to "the next place." Each *wonderful throne* has a cycle or succession of specific spots in the Realms that it can move to in order; the smallest known cycle is two (that is, shuttling back and forth between two spots) and the largest is a grand tour of nine locales. If the floor or surface the throne occupied when this cycle was set (once changed, there is no known way to change the cycle) is subsequently destroyed, the *throne* levitates in the spot it had always occupied previously, though it does



not extend any of this ability to items and beings in contact with it; those that fall from it will fall freely.

A wonderful throne is AC 0 and has 66 hit points. It reflects back any spells or magical item effects cast at it 100% at the source, protecting any items or beings in contact with the throne from such magics, but when it is destroyed, it simply crumbles, ending its own magic without harm or fanfare. Certain wizardly writings speak of successfully enchanting new thrones to replace destroyed ones on a known cycle—and also of accidentally discovering "empty," abandoned cycles by teleporting to one of the exact locales in the cycle and then being "jumped" in rapid succession through all of the locations in the cycle by the single spell, back to the first location. It seems that the cycle or trail of a throne outlives the stone chair itself for an unknown period of time, but all attempts to magically trace or detect such cycles have thus far failed.

Various beings down through the ages have used thrones that they discovered as private fast transportation links; as ways of reaching a succession of caches, strongholds, or bases that they built or modified at each locale in the cycle; as a secret route to invade the hearts of strongholds or kingdoms with armies (one warrior at a time); and even as a testing gauntlet of perils or traps, by placing dangers, challenges, or puzzles at each location in a throne cycle for sitters to discover in succession. The long-dead wizard Aerglandra of Athalantar (thought to be the only sorceress of note to rise in that realm after Elminster departed for Myth Drannor) even writes of a wonderful throne that transformed humans sitting in it, making one alteration for each locale of its cycle, with each change augmenting a being's personal power, but each also involving a system shock survival roll. In order, these changes gave the seated being: infravision, water breathing, spider climb, and fly. These four abilities, given in sequence, worked as the wizard spells and were usable as often asand for as long as—desired, by silent act of will. The chair then, in sequence, granted: lizard man shape, pseudodragon shape, and finally weredragon status (that is, the controlled ability to switch between a specific dragon form and human shape). These changes were permanent, although most sitters perished part of the way along the cycle through system shock or left the chair, which then moved on by itself to the unknown next locale in its journey stranding the sitter. One transport location of this particular throne is believed to be somewhere in the southern reaches of the High Forest.

### Zarangan

XP Value: 6,000 GP Value: 25,000.

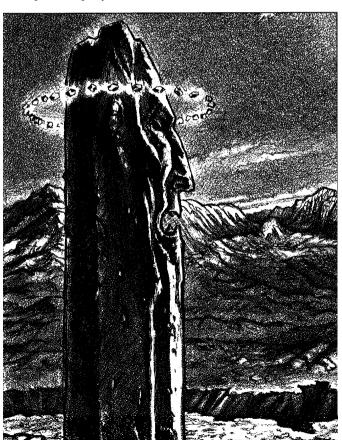
These small items are believed to be yet another legacy of the survivors of a long-lost kingdom, perhaps Netheril. Once carried exclusively by mages of Halruaa, they are now encountered in the hands of liches and archmages all over Faerûn—notably certain powerful Red Wizards of Thay and Zhentarim.

A *zarangan* is a smooth, but odd-shaped, stone that appears to have been polished to a glossy surface but typically has horn-shaped protrusions, rounded knobs, and a "handgrip" indentation. It can be used as a hand weapon akin to brass knuckles that deals 1d4+1 points of damage, but its function is as follows: Whenever it is grasped and the being in contact with it silently wills it to function, it can *dimension door* its bearer up to 600 yards in any desired direction. Control over the trip is as for the wizard spell, and the *zarangan* can so function once per round without limit, except that if the bearer is affected by any other spell or magical item effect, the *zarangan* pauses for 1 round before functioning again.

A *zarangan* has two additional powers; use of these requires the utterance of command words that are sometimes, but not always, graven on the item itself. It can take its bearer "home," teleporting without error to a single, predetermined locale anywhere on Toril, or it can *cure serious wounds* on its bearer or a touched being. Both of these powers can be called upon only once per day, and the home destination cannot be altered, once set; unless a new *zarangan* is crafted, the home locale is bound to be a place unfamiliar and possibly hostile to a new user of an older item, and many are the monster-haunted, trap-filled former strongholds of archmages now dead—or transformed into liches.

A zarangan can only transport one being, regardless of how many are in contact with the bearer. It frees the bearer from all nonmagical restraints and forcibly separates him or her from the grasp of other creatures when it is called upon to function. Certain zaranga (the plural form of zarangan) emit brief bursts of harmless but spectacular light when functioning, and others give forth a dramatic tone or chord, but most are silent.

It has been reported that certain *zaranga* have an additional power usable twice per day for up to 1 turn at a time. This power is usually a protective spell such as *ironguard*, *invisibility*, or *airy water*, or a useful effect such as *levitate* or *unseen servant*, but sometimes it may be an offensive magic such as *chain lightning* or *cone of cold*. It also seems increasingly likely that all *zaranga* confer immunity to specific spells on the bearer—perhaps one to three magics at most—but there is no known way of discovering just *which* spells except by accident in battle.



Weirdstones







# The Magic of the Person

hen confronting a mage—or building one's own spells to become a mage—it is often useful to think on the purposes of magic in the selfish sense, as humans wield it. So, for what do most folk use magic? To get their own way in things, to reshape Toril the way they want it to be, to

achieve their desired aims, or to further their interests, yes. Some lust after power for its own sake—as a manipulative threat in courts, high councils, or the mercantile world, actually applied only rarely and with subtlety or as a raw hammering force to be exulted in as one's enemies are laid low and barriers smashed asunder. Some like to destroy, some like folk to fear them or just obey them without rebellion or resistance. And others like to feel important, as if they will leave their mark on all Faerûn forever or be revered by all during their lifetimes. A few even want to rule the world and enslave us ail.

These are uses of magic familiar to even the simplest woodcutter through tavern tales and-all too often-the latest news, but the uses more familiar to wizards, I believe, are what I might call the personal, paranoid uses of magic: to defend yourself, to keep yourself healthy, and, ultimately, to cheat death. Some mages may snort at that conclusion-but I answer: Why then all the use of elixirs? Potions of longevity? The various expensive, difficult, and often unpleasant processes for achieving lichdom?<sup>2</sup> The other, sometimes desperate strivings for immortality such as taking the shapes of dragons?<sup>3</sup> Or sharn?<sup>4</sup> Or serving a god, as the Chosen of Mystra do?<sup>5</sup> And why the large and evergrowing body of protective and contingency magics, from Elminster's evasion to the Simbul's spell sequencer, spell supremacy, synostodweomer, and spell trigger? 6 Protect, anticipate, defend, and weasel free of death work, all of them! There is more, too. A school of secretive magics known as "body wards" is being developed by Red Wizards and Zhentarim from what they have managed to steal from certain Halruaan mages. I am just beginning to unearth details of these defensive spells (akin to the guardianship magics of another chapter)-but I plan to reveal them more fully in later writings.7

The sections that follow explore some of the routes to personal power used by both priests and wizards of Faerûn. No talk of such things is complete without a mention of the always-active "mantle" of protective spells carried (legends say) by Netherese archmages and built up throughout their careers until they were sorcerer-kings, akin to gods! The secrets of such mighty magics are long lost to us, I fear, but there is one paltry modern equivalent: the *sash of spells*, which I have managed to bring out of Halruaa where so many others have failed!<sup>8</sup> Here, then, is this most puissant of modern magics:

### 9th-Level Wizard Spell

Sash of Spells (Wiz 9; Alteration, Conjuration, Evocation)

Range: 0
Components: V,S
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 turn

Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: None

This potent spell betrays its presence by a diagonal line of radiance on its caster's body (hence its name). The glow of a sash of spells shines through clothing, magical darkness, and disguises, and it simply cannot be hidden. The casting of a sash of spells is begun with a word and gesture, and ended with another word and gesture. In the eight rounds between, the line of radiance hangs in front of its caster, curling down to touch his or her feet, and receives all spells cast into it by the sash-caster or others (priests or wizards) during this time at a rate of one spell per round. Such spells must be cast normally with any usual material components, but the radiance serves as their target. Whatever the normal area of effect or result of a spell, it is swallowed by the radiance without taking effect. (If two or more spells are cast into the radiance on the same round, all such simultaneous spells are lost, dissipating harmlessly, but they have no effect on spells already absorbed by the radiance, or on its absorption in rounds to come.)

Absorbed spells can be of any sort, regardless of the alignment, class, faith, or schools of expertise of the sash-caster, who is insulated from any personal effects of spells in the sash; spells cast into the sash may also be of any level. Moreover, if two copies of the same spell (in other words, two wizardly dispel magic spells or two priestly dispel magic prayers, but not a dispel magic from each class) are cast into it, the sash itself generates a third "free" copy of the spell, increasing its capacity beyond the normal eight spells. (It is possible to fill the sash with eight copies of the same spell—usually magic missile, dispel magic, fireball, or lightning bolt—and gain four extras).

When the sash-casting ends, the radiance drifts quickly around the caster's body and joins its two ends; the sash of spells is ready to use. The caster is instantly made aware of all stored spells, including their precise effects and amount of damage, and can release them at any time thereafter, even if years pass before they are all used.

Spells can only be released from the sash by a free-willed (not charmed, psionically coerced, or otherwise controlled) mind, and that mind can only belong to the wearer of the sash, who is almost always the caster. A sash can be transferred from its caster to another being by one round of direct flesh-to-flesh contact and a willed transfer — but both the caster and the recipient must be willing or no transfer occurs. When such a transfer is made, both the sash-giver and the person receiving the sash suffer 2d4 points of damage from the wild surges of magical energy involved.

One spell per round can be unleashed from the sash by its wearer. Such spells have a "release\* casting time of 1 since their actual casting time has already been fulfilled, and their release is a matter of silent will alone. If the wearer of the sash is a spellcaster, she or he can also cast in the usual manner any one memorized spell during the same round that has a casting time of 9 or less.

The death of the sash-wearer causes all stored spells in the sash to erupt spectacularly at random targets, often with strange results. Noth-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See the Elixirs section later in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Dracolich and human lichdom recipes appear in Volume 1 of the ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™ sourcebooks. Another route to this intelligent undeath is becoming an archlich (detailed in SJR1 Lost Ships and featured in the novel Shadows of Doom).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Volo: Taking dragon shape allows one to live practically forever, use contingencies not usually available to humans, and ultimately to pursue dracolichdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Sharn are strange, near-immortal creatures described in the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set and the *Netheril* boxed set. Although sharn are thought to have existed before Netheril it is also believed by many sages that many Netherese archmages ultimately transformed themselves into sharn when they had grown tired of human existence—or when their human bodies failed them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Elminster: That's NOT why we did it. Judge not others by thine own self-serving standards, Volo.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Elminster's evasion is detailed in the Pages Prom the Mages accessory and all of the Simbul's magics mentioned here appear in The Seven Sisters sourcebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Elminster: If, young and clever dolt, ye somehow manage to live so long.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Elminster: (Yawn.)



ing short of a *limited wish* or *wish* spell can take a *sash* out of existence, and *dispel magic* and similar spells cannot force even a single spell out of a *sash* involuntarily. The presence of a *sash* removes all weariness or need to sleep from its wearer, but a being can wear only one *sash* at a time; those attempting to cast another *sash* of *spells* find that the spell is wasted until the first one is used up.

## Innate Talents

Many tales heard around tavern hearths or firesides in Faerûn concern normal farm folk-or, sometimes, overworked merchants-who in a moment of great oppression exhibit some small magical power that even they never knew they possessed and thereby catch foes (evil, overbearing wizards, usually) by surprise to win the day. Such tales are mainly fantasy-as are the claims often made after such a tale, about so-and-so knowing someone down in the next village who has this or that power, though they try to keep it hidden. If a quarter of such tellings are to be taken as truth, every third or fourth person in the Realms would have the sort of minor spell-like powers known to sages as innate talents. The true number of such folk is probably nearer one for every thousand-and-ahalf-still an astonishingly high number, but then again, perhaps not so high as all that, given the amount of magic crawling and flashing around the Realms with each passing century-and even within easy memory, a time of wild magic when the gods themselves walked Faerûn to touch mortals personally. Who is to say what powers they bestowed then?

What is certain is that from earliest known times a rare few folk have had natural, spell-like powers. Usually they were limited to only one ability per person, and such abilities always manifested in someone not able to master magic through study and aptitude as wizards do. Almost all of these gifted folk have kept their powers as secret as possible out of simple fear, for the incidence of innate talents does seem to be hereditary, though the power gained by a son or daughter is always different from the one wielded by their parent. Most of them have also lived the majority of their lives in complete ignorance of their abilities, because their talents only awaken at the touch of magic-magic wielded by someone else, that is, or radiating from an enchanted item or in a spot that has just experienced the release of a powerful spell or that is holding a magic that has not yet been triggered. Sometimes contact with a healing spell or even drinking a potion awakens a slumbering inner power. All innate talents have been awakened by magical contact, without exception-though many did not necessarily manifest the first time that a particular person felt the touch of magic.

This is another of the topics that most wizards want hushed away as much as possible, not just because of possible competition or the personal danger posed by a wizard-slayer who has a minor magical power, but to keep legions of local villagers all wanting to be tested for innate talents away from their doors. I do not advocate that everyone rush out into the midst of sorcerous duels or to pay a wizard to test them, just to see if they have some wonderful, hitherto-unknown ability, but I do want to assure individuals who are shocked by the first, often explosive (as it is totally uncontrolled), release of their power that they have not been cursed or marked by "the dark powers," or caught some sort of wild magic disease. Folk have thought such things, and even taken their own lives in terror to avoid "tainting" loved ones or being shamed before their neighbors or battle companions.

So be aware that at any contact with magic<sup>9</sup> there is a 1% chance (not cumulative) of awakening an innate talent if one is not a wizard. (Wizards always have a 0% chance of having an innate talent.) This chance rises to 2% if one is the sole target of magic delivered by direct touch or drinks a potion or elixir (see the Elixirs section that follows this one). Percentile dice should be rolled at a magical contact, and if an innate

talent is indicated, it erupts instantly, usually with unintended or unexpected results. There are no known ways to increase one's chances of revealing—or having—an innate talent, and some talents have been known to fade over time, usually disappearing in 1d6 + 1 years, if they are going to disappear at all.

Roll Id20 and consult the table below to determine what sort of talent emerges, or select an ability from the Special Powers list at the end of the great elixir description in the Elixirs section that follows this one. Alternatively, the DM can create a power appropriate to game balance. The first manifestation of a power may not always be what it truly is: Many a startled merchant has spit out a magic missile bolt at a foe, only to levitate himself into the air whenever he tries to spit out a magic missile again. This is the reason that so many folk exhibit strange magical manifestations when slain by magic in battle—and not, as some wizards fear, that one or more widespread secret fellowships of mages exist who conceal their powers from the wider world.

#### 1d20

### Roll Innate Talent

- Old Clairaudience once/day. Activation of the talent causes the user 1 point of damage, and continued use causes and additional point of damage at the end of the second round, another at the end of the third, and 1 per round thereafter. Duration of use is limited only by talented one's choice or hit points. This talent is otherwise identical to 3rd. level wizard spell.
- Deflect mental magic or psionics (self only). The talent operates automatically and without limit whenever the talented being is confronted by an illusion or any magic or psionic power that seeks to influence the talented mind. Roll 1d6: On a result of 1, this talent fails to function; on a result of 2 or 3, the talent reduces the outside influence to a one-round duration or the minimum possible damage; on a result of 4, 5, or 6, the talent completely blocks the outside mental influence. When used against illusions, 1 is failure, 2 and 3 denote sensing something wrong with what is seen, and 4 or more is a clear view of what is really there with a ghostly image of the illusion superimposed over it.
- 03 Deflect spell. Unlike spell turning, this talent works on rays, beams, and aimed magic only, not magic missiles or area-of-effect magics. Roll 1d6: A result of 1 means the talent fails to function, but any other result means the magic missed and went off at a random location or target. The DM should determine what is affected, if anything.
- 04 Detect good and/or evil (some talents can feel only one, some feel both). This talent only works while the target of the talent is in line of sight and only functions when concentrated upon. One being per round can be determined and the talent cannot pierce magical cloaking or misdirection, though a feeling of "something wrong" is gained when these are in use. Using the talent is very tiring, and its use is limited in rounds of use per day to the number of Constitution points possessed by the talented one.
- 05 Detect snares, traps, and pits. The talent is usable without limit, but effective only 20% of the time. It has a 30-foot range.
- Direction sense. This talent provides unerring knowledge of where the four cardinal compass directions are, not one's relationship to known features such as "home" or "Windstar Castle." It is usable without limit.
- 07 ESP (once/day). Activation of the talent causes the user 2 points of damage, and it lasts 6 rounds. The talent is otherwise identical to the 2nd-level wizard spell, but it can be used on one target being only, who must be seen and within 40 feet.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Elminster: At this point Volo (as usual) launched into a silly rant about remaking the Realms with an army of magically talented warriors who rise up to overthrow the established rulers and archmages, so I've taken over and put what little is known and should be revealed into AD&D game terms familiar to my readers.



- 08 Foresight. This talent can be tried without limit until successful, but can successfully be used only once per day. Roll 1d6: On a 1, the user knows what a single, specific creature will do or attempt during the next round. On a 5 through 6, use of the talent is unsuccessful.
- 09 Infravision. The talent is usable without limit, but function only when concentrated upon. It has a 40-foot range.
- 10 Ironguard. This talent is usable only once every three days for up to 7 rounds at a time; activation of the ability causes the talented one 1 point of damage. The talent functions similar to the ironguard spell detailed in Pages From the Mages. In short, metal objects pass through the user's body without doing any harm, though magical weapons with pluses do as many points of damage as they have bonuses.
- 11 Levitate (self only, once/day). The talent allows 10 feet of vertical, horizontal, or diagonal movement per round. The talent can be used for up to 6 rounds, and it can be used as desired by the talented one. Its use causes 1 point of damage to the user per 10 feet moved after 30 feet.
- 12 Locate water (4 times/day). The talented one has an unerring sense of the nearest water. Use of the talent requires a round of concentration (whereupon the answer is known), and the talented one can choose between a large moving body of water and smaller, still amounts—in other words, can ignore a belt canteen, rain, mist, or a puddle to concentrate on finding an underground stream or concealed well. The talent has a 200-foot range and ignores water contained in potions, liquor, food, or living things; it can also distinguish between enchanted water and unenchanted, and choose to ignore one or the other.
- Object reading (once/day). If a single item is handled for a continuous turn, 1d4 visions of its past uses, owners, creation, dramatic involvements, and the like may then be gained by the talented one. The talent has a 6 in 10 chance of operating, but even a failed attempt is considered that day's use.
- 14 Stone tell (once/day). This talent functions as the 6th-level priest spell of the same name, but its lasts for only 6 rounds. Its activation causes the user 1 point of damage.
- Telekinesis. This talent works on nonliving matter only and does not affect undead creatures. It works on a single item plus whatever it contains or is attached to it of up to the talented user's own weight. The talent can move the object 10 feet vertically, horizontally, or diagonally per round. Its use can last up to 8 rounds, and it can be used as desired. Its usage causes the talented on 1 point of damage per 10 feet moved after 40 feet.
- 16 Temporal stasis (self only). This talent works similar to the 9th-level wizards spell, but the talented one can leave temporal stasis at will and is free to think, hear, and receive magic or mental contacts but is otherwise unaware of his or her surroundings. In other words, the talented one has no sight, smell, or feeling while in temporal stasis. The talent can be used as often as desired for as long as desired, but there is a 60% chance the amount of time desired to be in temporal stasis is overestimated or underestimated; telling time when in temporal stasis is notoriously difficult. (DM's discretion as to whether too much time or too little and how much.)
- 17 *Time stop* (twice/year). This talent functions as the 9th-level wizard spell. Its activation causes the user 2d4 points of damage.
- Tree (self only). The use of this talent has a silent and instant onset. The type of tree shape the user assumes is appropriate to the terrain or random if no tree type is suited to the landscape. The talent functions just as the 3rd-level priest spell does, but its duration is

- unlimited. Each activation causes the user 1 point of damage, plus another 1 point of damage if tree form is maintained until the next sunrise, and another 1 point for each sunrise thereafter.
- 19 Water walking (3 times/day). This talent functions as the 3rd-level priest spell water walk; it can be used for up to 6 rounds at a time. Its activation causes the user 1 point of damage.
- 20 Two abilities are gained, but the talented being never knows which one is usable on any given day. There is a random chance which talent predominates or one talent tends to predominate over the other, as the DM determines.

If talented folk marry, any children are 4% likely to have a talent <sup>10</sup> and 1% likely to spontaneously manifest it at birth, though it does not return until activated by a magical contact. (Unlike the innate talents of others, the first magical contact always awakens a talent that has manifested at birth.) The chance is not cumulative from generation to generation and can never rise above 4% for any reason, and it is wise to remember that many talented folk, especially newborn babes, are branded as "fiendkin" or worse in many lands of Faerûn and driven away or slain out of hand. The sage Eltrivyn of Candlekeep offers sanctuary to all folk with innate talent who intend no harm to others; he studies all who come to dwell with him.

# Elixins

Almost everyone in Faerûn, it seems, has heard tales of ambitious wizards striving to master spells only the gods can cast, or to find ways to enter other worlds, or to cheat death itself by becoming a lich—and even among farmhands, there are those quick-witted enough to conceive for themselves thoughts about wizards no doubt searching for alternatives to lichdom, or searching for the lost magics of the long-perished—or even seeking to become deities. Few folk, however, can have guessed what topic of my writings in the first edition of this guidebook enraged mages the most. It was elixirs, the most secret and hotly pursued field of study among mages of might in Faerûn today.

This is no mere search for better-tasting magical potions, mind you. This is a slow, perilous, often deadly search for enchanted drinks that can change human (and sometimes demihuman) bodies so as to bestow special powers on the imbiber. Much study and experimentation is necessary-often using captives, underlings, or even unwitting hired adventurers given drinks and observed from afar.<sup>11</sup> Years may pass before a wizards gains anything useful or abandons a particular line of inquiry as fruitless. When first I heard of "potion dosing," I was inclined to dismiss it as the hobby-perhaps, for some, an obsession (but then for archmages anything from ladybug observation to blackbramble breeding can be an obsession) -of wizards with far too much power, idle time, and introspection for their own good. Very old legends tell of wizards drinking concoctions and being transformed into horrid monsters, but I was surprised to hear of sorcerers willingly trying such things in the complete absence of duress. When a dragon is tearing apart one's tower or an angry army is storming the gates, a little desperate quaffing or trying anything at all is understandable, but one does not expect wizards to eagerly pursue something even longer, messier, and more dangerous than spell research for less of a likely gain than a new spell will bring.

Still, wizards do tend to grow increasingly suspicious of the world as they get older, and the fear of having one's magic entirely negated or stripped away as one's enemies grow in numbers and power and one's own body shrivels and weakens looms ever-larger. This is why, I have no doubt, that almost every wizard able to cast a *meteor swarm* turns at least once to the few and arcane writings on elixirs and starts gathering

11 Elminster: All extremely unethical and highly morally suspect acts.

 $<sup>^{10}</sup>$ They receive one roll at 4% at birth and the normal 1% or 2% chance thereafter.



good glass flasks. I can prove that the Lady Mage of Waterdeep, Laeral Silverhand; Halaster, the mad master of Undermountain; Vangerdahast, Royal Wizard of Cormyr; and even the legendary Ahghairon of Waterdeep have dabbled in the study of elixirs-as well as many, many lesser wizards. More than that: In these pages, for the first time ever anywhere, I have set forth details of three known stable<sup>12</sup> elixirs and some notes on a far more deadly fourth.

I do not recommend that mages initiate or continue experimentations into elixirs, and I want to stress now that the elixirs presented here represent some of the few successes in a field rife with poisonings, explosions, and other unintentional disasters. Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun called the study of elixirs "the most perilous waste of time I know of-after the quest for an honest man," and although that may be overly cynical, it should be heeded. Take advantage of my searching out of secrets, but resist the temptation to better what is set forth here. Some of the ingredients may well be spurious, but the formulae, as presented, do work; those who discover other formulae are warned that ingredients are often intentionally omitted or distorted to lay traps for the unauthorized reader.

It should be noted that there is nothing save lack of leisure time, wealth, and power to keep most folk of Faerûn from the use of elixirs. Priests, nobles, and indeed everyone can (if they are foolish enough) get into the game, though an ability to wield spells seems necessary for many of the more powerful effects. On the other hand, it is good indeed for the stability of life in Faerûn, such as it is, that such reckless endeavors tend to interest mainly powerful wizards, and not the wiser, saner rest of the population.

### Annath's Draft

To Master Cold is the title and purpose of the only extant original copy of the formula for the elixir devised by the long-dead mage Annath of Kurtyl (a tiny hamlet in downland Amn). The original is now hidden in Candlekeep. The completed elixir is a deep emerald green in hue and tastes "minty-bitter." When the elixir is drunk, roll a d20 and consult the table below to determine the result:

### Roll Elixir Result

- 01-06 Elixir fails and imbiber suffers 1d12 points of internal, corrosive damage. There is a 22% chance that 1 hit point is permanently lost.
- 07-09 Nothing occurs; the elixir fails.
- 10-14 Imbiber permanently gains +1 on all saving throws vs. cold magic, but the elixir has no other effect.
- Elixir takes full effect, but those abilities granted by it are
- gained only for 2d12 months. Elixir is successful, conferring permanent abilities on the 17-100 imbiber.

If the elixir fails to confer permanent benefits on the imbiber, a second drinking of it can have no beneficial result until the imbiber has gained another experience level. Once any beneficial effect has been gained, further drinkings of elixirs of the correct formula have an 88% chance of conferring all known permanent beneficial effects and only a 12% chance of doing harm. (If a result of 12 or less occurs on a d100 roll, roll as for the result for 01-06 on the table above.)

A successful Annath's draft bestows the following powers on its imbiber:

- Immunity to the effects of frostbite, exposure, and extreme cold, even when the body is naked or wet. No part of the imbiber's body can freeze, and natural cold the imbiber does no damage. Magical cold, including dragon breath, does only 1 point of damage per die.
- Once per day, the imbiber can melt ice or snow or completely thaw frozen ground by will and touch. No greater volume than the imbiber's head can be affected, and the transformation takes 2 rounds.
- Although no special discomfort accompanies this, the imbiber is henceforth made acutely aware of even minute changes in tempera-

To make Annath's draft, the following ingredients must be combined in a clear glass vessel that is kept cool and lit only by moonlight or conjured faerie fire and never by the sun or any equivalent bright magical light:

- A fist-sized or larger piece of green ice from a deep rift in the Great
- A fist-sized or larger piece of ice from an iceberg floating free in a Faerûnian sea.
- Shavings or fragments of frost or ice formed on metal that has known the touch of lightning.
- Six frozen tears from one princess.
- Three drops of white dragon blood.
- One drop of remorhaz ichor, collected hot while the beast vet lives.
- One scrap of seal fat at least as large as the imbiber's thumbnail.
- One scrap of whale blubber.
- One fist-sized chunk of ice from water frozen by magic or through the actions of an elemental.
- One powdered polar or floe-bear tooth.

When all the ingredients are present, the mixture should be thawed by a fire lit only when the moon is in the sky (even when the procedure is done underground or indoors), taken from the heat the moment all frozen ingredients have melted, stirred, and then placed in darkness for at least three days before being drunk. One being must consume all of Annath's draft within a three-round period; samplings of less of it or drinking it over a longer time always have no effect or harmful results.

### The Plame Plixin

To Master Fire is the title and purpose of the elixir formula devised by the renegade Red Wizard Torgyl Bulter (long hunted by his vengeful ex-comrades and now thought to be dead, slain in a shape not his own on a distant plane). It is encrypted in three parts: A few key notes as to amounts of ingredients are given in a floridly scripted love poem in a chapbook housed in the Rose Room library at Piergeiron's Palace in Waterdeep; the main body of the formula itself is hidden in A Shorter History of Amn in Andamer's Lending Librarium in Athkatla; <sup>14</sup> and a single vital ingredient is to be found in the treatise "The Falling Feather: Romance and Passion Among Modern Nobel Lasses" in Candlekeep. Expect a few raised eyebrows there when you ask for this last highly colorful work-but it is worth the extra fee for the time it takes to hunt through its pages of racy gossip and discover just which ladies use the feathers alluded to in the title and what for. The completed elixir is amber in hue with a deeper red where the light catches it and tastes like scorched almonds. When it is drunk, the imbiber suffers 1d3 points of damage immediately and a percentile die roll is made. Consult the following table:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Volo: I will not say safe.

Volo: Those consumed with the hunger for more power are directed to Candlekeep, where it is rumored that the formula for at least one more elixir—of unknown powers—lies hidden in a score or more of now-moldering books in cryptic writings concealed among mundane accounts of lore.

14 Volo: The loan costs 1 sp per hour, and two hours should be sufficient. Would-be thieves and page-removers are warned that Andamer can send a gargoyle to unerr-

ingly hunt down books or those carrying the enspelled coins he gives patrons in change.



### d100

#### Roll Elixir Result

- Elixir fails and flames erupt from the imbiber's body, igniting flammable clothing and contacted furnishings or objects and doing the imbiber an additional 1d12 points of internal damage. If a fire starts due to the flames, far greater damage may ensue.
- Nothing occurs, and the elixir fails.
- Imbiber gains immunity to all heat and flame damage for 1d10
- 88-100 Elixir is successful, conferring permanent abilities on the imbiber as outlined hereafter.

If drinking an elixir does not result in permanent success, further quaffings of flame elixir, though always dealing 1d3 points of damage, never result in any successful result until the imbiber has gained another experience level. Repeated exposure to this elixir does increase an imbiber's chance of success: Each quaffing cumulatively improves the next roll on this table for the same being by 1d4 percentage points. If Aloysious the Most Puissant fails to gain any powers from his first quaffing but has the ingredients and hit points to spare, he could drink a dozen more flame elixirs as quickly as he can make them and gain a bonus of 12 to 48 points on the next roll that counts (that is, when he reaches his next experience level and drains yet another flame elixir then).

A successful flame elixir confers the following powers on its imbiber:

- · Thrice per day, the imbiber can make his or her eyes blaze with flames for up to 3 rounds. These are illusory and cannot ignite or harm anything, but they look very impressive and can illuminate dark surroundings as a faerie fire spell does, providing enough light to read by.
- Twice a day, the imbiber can ignite a piece of unenchanted wood, rope or charcoal by touch. (No words, spark, or flame are needed.)
- Once per day, the imbiber can call forth firefinger effect: A jet of flame up to 6 inches in length shoots forth from a chosen digit of the imbiber's body for up to a round. In other words, this jet can either be gone quickly or remain long enough to burn through or consume something. The flame is very hot and readily ignites parchment, wood, textiles, and the like. It can do 1 point of damage to creatures, but it can never harm the imbiber. For instance, if the imbiber's hands were tied, she or he could ignite the ropes and let them burn away without suffering harm-although if his or her clothing caught on fire, too, damage to the imbiber would result.
- The imbiber can come into brief (1 round or less) contact with nonmagical fire without harm. In other words, she or he takes no damage from briefly carrying a hot pot or other object, walking through a fire, or reaching into flames to retrieve something.

To make *flame elixir*, the following ingredients must be combined in an obsidian vessel while cold:

- Seven drops of oil in which a red-hot swordblade has been tem-
- Six plant seeds scorched in the burst of the same fireball.
- One drop of red dragon blood.
- One tear from a fire lizard.

### Or:

- One droplet of liquid from the eye of a pyrolisk.
- One lump of charcoal from wood that has borne a dweomer.
- Two pinches of volcanic ash.
- Eight knives of saltpeter. (A "knife" is the amount of a substance that can be heaped onto a belt dagger blade.)

When all of these ingredients have been gently stirred together, 15 they must be poured into a metal crucible and heated over lava while being stirred and tamped with an iron rod until all solid ingredients have dissolved or been reduced to particles. Then the mixture must be poured into a copper bowl and kept surrounded by candlelight until a fire elemental or other creature from the Elemental Plane of Fire is brought (usually summoned) within 90 feet of it. Within a day of that exposure, the being who will drink the elixir must quench a burning stick in it while his or her own flesh is in contact with the stick's flame and then drink the elixir within four rounds. Any deviation from these timings results in automatic failure of the elixir.

### Halaster's Quaff

To Master Death is the title and purpose of an elixir formula graven into the floor of a chamber deep in Undermountain. The formula is encircled by the legend: "He Who is to be Feared: Halaster." Many adventurers have found and copied the formula, and so Halaster's quaff has become the best-known and most widely used of all elixirs. However, it is also one of the most deadly. Many of those who quaff it die or are forever maimed by its use-and some are driven to such desperation by what it has done to them that they make and drink repeated doses in hopes of finding either death or a complete cure. The completed elixir is a black, lightless syrup, and purportedly tastes like bone marrow.<sup>16</sup> When it is drunk, the imbiber suffers 2d6 points of damage immediately and a percentile die roll is made. Consult the following table:

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Roll	Elixir Result
01-14	Elixir fails, and the imbiber dies instantly (no saving throw).
15-23	Elixir fails, and the imbiber suffers an additional 4d4 points of damage.
24-29	Elixir fails, and the imbiber is stricken with <i>feeblemindedness</i> (as in the spell feeblemind).
30-39	Elixir fails, and one of the imbiber's limbs withers away to bare bone, but the strength and mobility of the limb is retained and bodily functions are sealed off from the affected limb. This is process causes 1d4+1 points of damage for each of four suc-

- cessive days. The imbiber's skin turns dead white, and his or her eyes 40-48 become a glittering red; 90-foot infravision is permanently
- The imbiber's gender changes, accompanied by an appropriate 49-58 change in appearance.
- The imbiber loses an experience level (with all the abilities tied 59-66 to that standing) but permanently gains 9 hit points.
- The imbiber gains permanent immunity to chill touch and 67-77 energy drain attacks, but the elixir has no other effect.
- The imbiber gains all helpful powers and abilities as for a suc-78-82 cessful Halaster's quaff for 2d8 months.
- Elixir is wholly successful. 83-100

This elixir can be drunk as often as the imbiber can prepare or procure it. Each drinking is unaffected by previous drinking results or the present condition of the imbiber.

A successful Halaster's quaff confers the following powers on its imbiber:

- · Immunity to chill touch, Strength-draining or other ability-draining, and energy drain attacks.
- Immunity to paralysis.
- · Immunity to feeblemindedness.

 $<sup>^{15}</sup>$  Volo: Warning: Energetic mixing can cause fire or an explosion.

<sup>16</sup> Elminster: Ick! And how would one find out how bone marrow tastes to know the taste? Double ick!



- Immunity to disintegrate and death magics.
- The imbiber gains 12 "extra" hit points, considered only when normal hit points are exhausted. (In other words, they do not affect saving throws vs. spell and the like.) When reduced to these last hit points, the imbiber has all the benefits of a ring of free action and a haste spell (without aging occurring). In addition, when the last "extra" hit point is exhausted, the imbiber does not die; rather, his or her body passes into the ethereal plane to drift senseless there in temporal stasis, existing indefinitely in such a state until aided by prearranged magic or the actions of another being or harmed by a creature who happens upon it. If this floating body is dealt an additional 12 points of damage, death does occur.

Halaster is known to have drunk this elixir and at least one of his apprentices stole its secrets from him, so the mad mage carved the formula on the floor to reveal it to all his other apprentices, denying a special advantage to one that the others did not possess. It has long been rumored that Halaster later improved upon this elixir and personally received the benefits of his augmented quaff, but no trace of an improved formula has ever been found, and the only answer the one adventurer bold enough to ask the mad mage about it on their face-to-face meeting in the depths of Undermountain received (itself a very rare thing) was a rather sad smile.

To make a measure of *Halaster's quaff*, the following ingredients must be mixed in a vessel of carved ivory or bone:

- · Powdered bone from a skeleton that has been undead.
- Flesh from the tongue of a ghoul.
- · At least six drops of blood from the heart of a peryton.
- · Flesh from a mimic.
- The eyeball of a zombie.
- At least three scales from a snake that has laired inside a human skull.
- · The powdered shell of a dragon or wyvern egg.
- A potion of sweet water.

When these things have been stirred together with a bone, a light spell must be cast into the liquid, and the elixir imbibed before its radiance expires.

### The Great Elixin

Rumors of the existence of a magical drink that turns farmers into wizards have floated around Faerûn for years, but most folk dismiss such talk as pure minstrels' fancy—forgetting that there is *some* truth behind almost every "minstrels' fancy." The so-called *great elixir* does exist, and for a time, it was used as a punishment in Halruaa. Miscreants convicted of capital crimes were forced to drink it and live with the ill—or good—effects. Its origin is forgotten, though some sages of things magical believe that it must be Netherese or come from the fallen kingdom of Raurin. Several incorrect, and therefore deadly, versions of its formula are in circulation among the mightiest wizards of Faerûn who vie for such things—but I am assured by a source I am compelled to trust<sup>17</sup> that the version given here is the correct one.

The completed elixir is a translucent aquamarine liquid that sparkles and swirls gently about in endless, self-induced motion. It tastes like fine wine on fire. It can be drunk only once per experience level. Additional imbibings or any partial samplings that do consume the entire elixir have no effect at all. When it is drunk, a percentile die roll is made. Consult the following table:

#### d100

#### Roll Elixir Result

- 01-14 Elixir fails, and death occurs instantly (no saving throw).
- 15-26 Elixir fails, and *feeblemindedness* (as the *feeblemind* spell)
- 27-32 Elixir fails, and the imbiber is afflicted with mindshadow madness (see the Wizshades section) or, if a wizard, his or her magic turns wild (see the relevant section in the *Tome of Magic*, or whenever the imbiber casts a spell, roll 1d8. For any roll of 5 or less, use the *wand of wonder* results table in the DUNGEON MASTER *Guide* to determine what occurs). Either of these harmful conditions has a 7 in 20 chance of lasting forever; if not, they last for 4d12 days.
- 33-39 Elixir fails, and blindness occurs instantly (no saving throw).
- 40-46 Elixir fails, and the imbiber is forced into an uncontrolled shapechange to a random beast form able to breathe air and live on dry land once per day, reverting back to his or her own form 1d4 turns later. (DM adjudicates when the shapechange occurs.)
- 47-56 Elixir fails, and imbiber is afflicted with lycanthropy (DM's choice of wereform).
- 57-65 Elixir fails, and the imbiber suffers permanent loss of 1 point of Strength.
- 66-70 Elixir fails, and the imbiber suffers permanent loss of 1 point of Constitution.
- 71-75 Elixir fails, and the imbiber suffers permanent loss of 2 points of Charisma.
- 76-86 Imbiber gains permanent 90-foot infravision.
- 87-95 Imbiber gains a special power (see below).
- 96-100 Imbiber gains immunity to an entire school of spells, including spells that are considered to fall into more than one school, so long as one of their classifications is the protected school, or a nonspellcaster gains the ability to wield magic as a wizard, starting at 1st level—in other words, a character has the ability to become a dual-class (or multiclass if demihuman and of a race permitting a wizard class as part of one of the character's potential options) character if of a race at any time in the future that the player desires (DM's choice, but note that races which cannot normally become wizards cannot do so because of this result and multiclass combinations not normally allowed are not allowed by this result.)

Some mages report that there is a way to gain a better chance of success when imbibing a *great elixir*, as follows: <sup>18</sup> Successfully drink one of the lesser elixirs described herein (or another elixir that confers minor helpful powers) and then purge its effects permanently by drinking a goblet of disenchanter blood. This reportedly removes the beneficial elixir abilities but gives the imbiber a 1d12 + 10% bonus per purged elixir on his or her *great elixir* effect roll.

### Special Powers

There are many spontaneous magical powers that have been reportedly gained through the use of a successful *great elixir*, among them or wield one of the following abilities:

- The ability to track as a ranger. (If the recipient is already a ranger, a + 1 bonus to proficiency checks is gained.)
- Armor (self only; 4/day for up to 1 turn each time).
- Change self (once/day for up to 3 turns).
- Detect magic (when concentrating, without limit, and with a 90-foot range).
- Dimension door (once/day as if employed by a 12th-level wizard).

<sup>17</sup> Elminster: Myself, of course-who else?

Elminster: It've replaced the nonsense Volo wrote in this passage with specific, accurate game information, of course. Nay, thank me not. Ye'll wish I hadn't soon enough



- Dispel magic (3/day as if employed by a 12th-level wizard).
- ESP (twice/day for up to 1 turn at a time).
- Featherfall (automatic and without limit).
- Hold person (once/day as if cast as 7th-level wizard, but works by touch only and lasts for 7 rounds).
- Invisibility (twice/day for up to 1 turn at a time, but ended by any successful attack launched by imbiber).
- Pass without trace (without limit).
- Spell turning (3/day; 100% at a target of the imbiber's choosing).
- Spider climb (without limit).
- Water breathing (automatic and without limit).
- Wraithform (once/day for up to 3 turns).
- "Greatness." (Three special powers from this list—or others at the DM's discretion—are gained, but each is usable only once/day for a maximum duration of 6 rounds). One of the Red Wizards is thought to have recently gained "greatness" in this way.

### Spellfine

One of the most awesome magical topics, even to archwizards, is the subject of spellfire. Spellfire is viewed by most Faerûnians as a ravening, all-consuming fire that the gods allow one person at a time in all the world to wield in order to humble kings, dragons, and great mages alike—a fire that is currently being hurled at the Zhentarim and others by a young woman named Shandril Shessair, who was born in the Dales and seems to be heading west. She is reported to have slain no less a personage than Manshoon, leader of the Zhentarim, and even more astonishingly, an entire ring of beholders, who had her trapped deep in Zhentil Keep.

While such tavern tales are grounded in truth, it should be made very clear that talk of the deities allowing only one mortal at a time to wield spellfire is so much fancy, though the ability is very rare and kept as secret as possible by those who have it. (Shandril's ability first manifested spontaneously in the midst of an adventure that revealed her powers to the Zhentarim and made her a marked, hunted person before she could learn control over spellfire or hope to hide it.) My investigations have led me to suspect that at least three rulers I have met—and several mages, too—have the power of spellfire, but I have been warned that to reveal their names means my sure demise, so I will merely say that these were folk I have met while engaged in writing my series of guidebooks to the Realms—as well as during a recent whirlwind tour of Toril involving certain magical jewels and much unpleasantness. I leave further investigations to the bold—not to say foolhardy—reader.

In Realms campaigns, only the DM can decide if a character is going to manifest spellfire ability (which may occur at any time and is usually triggered by direct contact with magic or a even the touch of an enchanted or magic-using being). This ability is hereditary, but also crops up at random, and some sages believe that it is a form of wild magic sent by the gods to forewarn mortals of great upheavals (such as, in Shandril's case, the Time of Troubles). It is very rare; while it is not true that only one spellfirewielder can exist in Faerûn at a time, known spellfire talents attract a lot of unwanted attention, as Shandril unwittingly did, and are very few and far between. Only in very rare cases—such as a low-level character being transported into the Outer Planes, for example—should a player character ever be given the ability to wield spellfire.

Inevitably, of course, some will, and so notes and rules on spellfire follow. Spellfire is one of the interests that have fascinated priests and

wizards down through the centuries, but no deific power has ever granted spellfire to a mortal who asked for it. (Elminster and the other Chosen of Mystra wield a similar silver fire, and at least Elminster and Khelben can also use spellfire itself, but these are abilities Mystra gave to them, not things they requested.). No mage seeking to gain the ability to hurl spellfire by means of the Art is known to have managed anything more than a *ravening fire* spell<sup>20</sup> that superficially resembles certain spellfire blasts.

### The Nature of Spellfire

Briefly defined, spellfire is the ability to use one's body to absorb life energy from diverse sources on the Prime Material Plane and later to release that energy either as uncontrolled bolts of silvery fire that can penetrate most defenses and wreak awesome damage or in a variety of ways controlled by silent act of will. Experience in the use of spellfire determines how much control a wielder has over his or her spellfire. A wielder's Constitution determines how much energy she or he can absorb and then release to power it the spellfire. Most of those who have observed spellfire in action have seen a blue-white, ravening flame that can melt or consume almost anything it touches, but the true nature and properties of spellfire remain largely unexplored mysteries at this time of writing.<sup>21</sup>

### Empowering Energy

For play convenience, spellfire energy is measured in spell levels (in other words, a 3rd-level spell such as *fireball* represents three spell levels). A creature with the power of spellfire can gain one spell level's worth of energy from the surroundings in 2d4 days given exposure to the sun and the ability to move about. Even if sunlight and movement are not available, if the creature remains in proximity to powerful dweomers (from wards, untriggered spells, or magical items), the rate of charging rises to one spell level in 1d4 days. (And adding sunlight and movement to magical proximity does not further increase this rate.)

Spellfire users often power themselves up for battle by absorbing magic directly. A 3rd-level spell cast at a spellfire wielder gains him or her three spell levels. A magical item discharge or spell-like power such as dragon breath can be absorbed without harm (preventing normal manifestation of its effects) and yield a spellfire wielder the spell levels of an equivalent spell. The DM must adjudicate what spells most closely resemble magical item functions or spell-like powers; in general, be conservative. If the spellfire user can directly touch magical items, they can be drained permanently, temporarily, or, if they use charges, simply have some of the charges transferred out of them.

A magical item charge equals one spell level, regardless of what the item does. A temporary draining of the item (causing it to be dormant and unfunctioning for 4d8 days) yields one spell level per weapon bonus or item function and more if the DM rules a function is extremely powerful. A permanent draining of an item yields double spell levels; regardless of the spellfire wielder's desires, items with special purposes, sentience (in other words, a talking sword), and artifacts cannot be permanently drained. Attempts to do so yield the double energy rate but merely cause the item to lie powerless but physically undamaged for 1d2 years. The sole exception to this is an item designed to discharge completely by being destroyed (the retributive strike of an enchanted staff, for example); such items yield the double rate and are permanently exhausted.

20 Elminster: Information on this spell is not given in this tome due to its randomly destructive and often self-destructive nature.

<sup>19</sup> Volo: A tour reported with sometimes distressing distortions in the novel Once Around the Realms by Brian Thomsen (TSR, 1995)

Elminster: 'Twould have been more accurate by far if Volo had said distressing accuracy" in the note above. The reader should also be aware that it is at about this point that I step in to purge Volo's driveling spellfire fancies and provide some AD&D game information.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Elminster: And let's keep it that way, shall we?



## Spellfire Experience

For game purposes, spellfire wielders are treated as if they have two classes. Experience points are awarded normally for adventures when no spellfire is used, but whenever spellfire is employed, all experience is split evenly between the character's real class and a phantom "spellfire class" that advances without training or recognition and is used purely to determine the degree of control over spellfire the wielder possesses. The Wizard Experience Levels table given in the *Player's Handbook* is used to measure a wielder's "spellfire level."

It should be noted that unlike true character classes, a spellfire wielder can advance in level *during* an adventure, and use his or her improved abilities instantly, feeling the augmented control. Refer to Spellfire Unleashed, later in this chapter, for details of what powers each level in the spellfire class gives a user.

For the first adventure in which a spellfire wielder successfully manifests and uses a *crown of fire* (see Spellfire Unleashed), the "spellfire class" half of the experience points gained by a spellfire user are quadrupled. This only applies to the spellfire half-share, and only occurs for the initial use of a *crown of fire* — not every time this power is used.

## Immunities to Spellfire

So few Spellfire exist and so stormy are their lives once their powers have been discovered that no organized experimentation has been done on the subject of what magic can withstand spellfire. Exceptions to the broad rules outlined here may soon be discovered-and it should be noted that no immunity to spellfire can withstand the effects of spellfire overloading (see below) if the spellfire wielder has a sufficiently strong Constitution.

Effects that absord or dissipate magic without storing it or using it to power an alternative effect are normally immune from a draining by a spellfire user and also absorb spellfire without taking harm from it (unless overloaded). Some examples of these are a *ring of spell turning* (which dissipates spellfire, being unable to redirect it at anyone-including back at its source), a rod of cancellation, a wand of negation (but only if the beam strikes the spellfire), a sphere of annihilation, and a dispel magic spell (but only if cast in the same round as the spellfire is used).

Spells and items that take in and store magical energy, such as a *ring of spell storing* and certain *ioun stones* (pale lavender ellipsoids, lavender-and-green ellipsoids, and vibrant purple prisms), absorb spellfire but can also be drained by a spellfire user.

Spells or item effects that are barriers to magic are immune to spellfire fire or blast destruction but can be absorbed by a spellfire user. This sort of magic includes the spells wall of force and anti-magic shell, and the effect of a scroll of protection from magic. For some unexplained reason, prismatic effects can be readily destroyed by spellfire, but only one hue or layer fails per round.

### Body Effects

A spellfire wielder's capacity for spellfire energy is determined by his or her Constitution. Up to 10 times the wielder's Constitution score (in spell levels) can be held in the body, but only half that can be handled risk-free (Constitution×5). Thereafter, the wielder and adjacent surroundings are at increasing risk as the amount of stored energy increases, as follows:

(Constitution×5) + 1 through Constitution×6: The spellfire wielder can feel the stored energy surging and roiling within, and his or her eyes glow slightly. Every 24 hours of continuous existence at this storage level forces a Constitution check on the spellfire wielder; failure indicates an surge of the stored energy that burns the wielder for 1d6 points of internal damage and expends one stored spell level.

If a being or a magical item touches the spellfire wielder during this state, 1d6 spell levels of stored energy are involuntarily released into them, doing 1d6 points of damage per spell level. Magical items must make an item saving throw vs. magical fire. Failure means the item erupts with an uncontrolled discharge of a random function at a random target area, and forces the item to make a second saving throw. If it also fails, the item is destroyed, releasing 1d4 more random discharges and pouring the rest of its energy into the spellfire wielder in a single raw surge. Magical items without charges must make the same saving throws, but if they have no magical effects to discharge (such as long sword +2), they discharge none but still risk destruction and the absorption by the spellfire wielder of their magical energy.

(Constitution×6) + 1 through Constitution×7: The spellfire wielder feels restless discomfort from the stored energy surging and roiling within, and his or her eyes glow brightly. The wielder's skin tingles, and a Constitution ability check (with results as above under (Constitution×5+1 through Constitution×6) must be made every hour. Contact with the spellfire user deals out a discharge of 2d6 spell levels and forces magical items to make an item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -1 penalty, with the results given above.

(Constitution×7) + 1 through Constitution×8: The spellfire wielder feels a burning sensation racing about within, and his or her fingertips feel numb. Small, delicate objects are readily dropped, which the DM should adjudicate. The wielder's eyes blaze enough to be noticed as light sources even when she or he stands in full sunlight, and even the wielder's skin glows faintly. The wielder must make a Constitution check (with results as above) every turn. Direct contact with the spellfire wielder causes 3d6 spell levels to be released and forces magical items to make an item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -2 penalty, with the results given above. Even nonmagical items are affected by direct contact and must make item saving throws vs. magical fire (with no penalty) or be destroyed. Items worn or carried by the spellfire wielder are not affected, as the wielder's body shields them against energy surges.

(Constitution×8)+1 through Constitution×9: The spellfire wielder's skin glows brightly, and his or her eyes are as bright as lanterns. The wielder is wracked with pain and feels as if she or he is on fire inside. The wielder must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation to successfully initiate any action except releasing spellfire energy. Failure indicates an immediate release of 4d6 spell levels of energy A Constitution check (with results as above) must be made every round. Direct contact with the wielder releases 4d6 spell levels and forces magical items to make an item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -3 penalty, with the results given above. Nonmagical items involved in such contacts must make an item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -1 penalty.

(Constitution×9)+1 through Constitution×10: The spellfire wielder's own clothing and items ignite and are swiftly consumed, doing possible fire damage to surroundings, but none to their wearer (unless magical items discharge, as noted earlier). The wielder's skin glows brightly, emitting heat that can be felt up to 30 feet distant and causing discomfort, but not damage, to other living things. The wielder must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation at a -2 penalty to successfully initiate any action except releasing spellfire energy. Failure indicates an immediate release of 5d6 spell levels of energy. A Constitution check (with results as noted earlier) must be made three times per round. Direct contact with the wielder causes the release of 5d6 spell levels and forces magical items to make an item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -4 penalty, with the results given above. Nonmagical items involved in such contacts must make an item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -2 penalty.

**Above Constitution×10:** For effects of more spell levels of energy than Constitution×10, see Spellfire Overloading, below.

**Side Effects:** Prolonged spellfire use (defined as attaining 3rd level as a spellfire wielder) has some side effects on the body of the wielder, as follows:



- Normal fire of any sort ceases to harm the wielder, save to scorch or burn away body hair, regardless of how fierce the conflagration: One spellfire wielder was seen to walk into a forest fire and travel through the entire flaming forest unharmed. This immunity includes immunity to all ill effects of smoke inhalation and burning or corrosive gases, including magical effects such as cloudkill. If a spellfire wielder is of 8th level or higher in spellfire use, she or he can burn spellfire in a slow, controlled manner to create a nimbus of spellfire about his or her person that keeps normal, magical, or even dragon breath fire at bay. Such a wielder can walk through a forest fire or a red dragon's breathing and keep his or her clothing, gear, and even companion creatures unharmed by sheltering them within this nimbus of spellfire.
- Magical fire is automatically absorbed by the spellfire wielder upon contact without the wielder needing to exercise any deliberate will or even to be conscious. If this stored energy reaches Constitutionx7, it awakens a sleeping or comatose spellfire wielder, regardless of magical or psionic compulsions to the contrary.
- A spellfire wielder can detect magic as far as she or he can see, perceiving dweomers as faint glows, and detecting flows of energy (drainings and operating magics) as streams of sparkling motes of light. This perception overlies normal vision but does not obscure it.
- A spellfire wielder can feel the direction and approximate distance of any spellfire use within 100 miles instantaneously and for as long as such use occurs. She or he can also know by touch if spellfire has ever affected an item or been active in a locale; however, the spellfire wielder must be in the locale and move about in it, not merely viewing it from afar or scrying it magically.
- Disintegrate magics automatically fail when directed against a spellfire wielder's body or anyone or anything in direct bodily contact with him or her, even if spellfire is not active at the time.
- A spellfire wielder can purge his or her own body of diseases, parasites (including molds and other external creatures), paralysis and petrification alterations, and all other magical effects that alter his or her body from its normal state by releasing 4 spell levels of spellfire internally. This causes wracking pain, and the wielder can do nothing else in the two rounds this process takes. It also deals the spellfire wielder 4d6 points of damage, but it purges the body completely. Charms, tracers, and geas magics are also be destroyed, even if the spellfire wielder is unaware of their existence. Note that the ability to wield spellfire is normal for a spellfire wielder and is affected by this purging.

### Spellfire Overloading

A spellfire wielder can be overloaded by taking in more than Constitution x10 in spell level energy. This causes the wielder excruciating pain and forces an involuntary release of the excess energy, so a foe who deliberately overloads a spellfire wielder in an attempt to make them explode faces a deadly counterattack. (The explosion of an overloaded spellfire wielder is an occurrence, it should be noted, that no one has yet managed to cause; it may well be impossible.) Save for very emotional, exceptional circumstances, such as avenging the death of a loved one, spellfire wielders never willingly overload themselves; the pain and risk are simply too great.

If a spellfire wielder exceeds his or her absorption limit, she or he involuntarily releases one spell level of spellfire energy 10 times per round; this is the only time spellfire can be emitted at this rate. The wielder suffers 2d6 points of internal damage for each such gut-ripping release, as well as dealing damage to others and the surroundings with the unleashed spellfire at the usual rate of 1d6 points per spell level of spellfire energy. How controlled this release of energy is depends on the spellfire user's spellfire level; the varying degrees of control are detailed under Spellfire Unleashed, hereafter. (A completely uncontrolled release would be a spherical blast radiating out evenly in all directions from the wielder's body.) These involuntary releases continue only until

one of them causes the total energy stored in the spellfire wielder to fall back into the Constitutionx10 category.

If the damage taken by a spellfire wielder ever brings him or her to the brink of death (0 hit points or beyond) when his or her spellfire is active, and the wielder is 5th level or higher in spellfire use, the spellfire instantly and automatically turns to healing mode and keeps the wielder alive, raising him or her to a positive total of at least 12 hit points before restoring control over spellfire to the wielder (unless available energy runs out before then). If the wielder is of 1st to 4th spellfire level, death does mean death, but all stored spellfire bursts out of the corpse in an uncontrolled fiery blast release.

Any uncontrolled release is spherical and centered on the wielder's body with a radius equal to 10 feet for every two stored spell levels of spellfire (round down). All creatures within that radius suffer 1d6 points of damage per spell level of spellfire released (no saving throw), and all items must make a successful item saving throw vs. magical fire at a -5 penalty or be destroyed. Magical items save at a -7 penalty, but receive three saving throws. If all three fail, the item is simply destroyed. If two fail, a wild magic release -use the wand of wonder percentile effect table in the DUNGEON MASTER Guide - occurs, draining the item of 2d4 charges (or if it lacks charges, making it dormant for 2d4 days), and hurling the item far away. If only one saving throw fails, the magical item is teleported without error to a random location elsewhere in Faerûn. Artifacts cannot be destroyed, but still make two item saving throws at a -3 penalty. If both are failed, they issue a wild magical release (as explained above) and are hurled far away; if one is failed, they are teleported without error to a random location elsewhere in Faerûn.

### Spellfire Unleashed

A spellfire wielder can ordinarily release a maximum amount of spellfire in a round equal in spell levels to his or her Constitution score (Constitutionx1). If used as a fiery weapon, this spellfire does a base 1d6 points of damage per spell level to target creatures. However, the nature of spellfire effects and the precision of control the wielder has over them are determined by the wielder's spellfire level.

Spellfire use is limited by the wielder's line of sight, not by distance. The wielder must make a successful attack roll (using the normal attack score for his or her character class) whenever a destructive bolt of spellfire is released at any mobile target more than 10 feet distant. Spellfire bolts that miss harm something else (including surrounding terrain), but the intended target is unscathed.

Targets struck by spellfire take the same damage whether the contact is slight or square-on, but damage is modified as follows: Nonmagical targets are allowed a saving throw vs. spell for half damage. Undead beings that drain life energy (experience levels) make this save at a +2 bonus but are not allowed a saving throw at all if their life forces are sustained by magic and not by the life forces they drain. (In other words, a vampire is allowed a saving throw, but a lich is not.) No creature that is created or sustained by magic (such as most undead beings) is allowed this saving throw—and neither are enchanted creatures, such as nonmagic-using warriors who have had protective spells cast on them, or beings who are bearing active magical items. Armor, shields and the like are for this purpose always considered "on," even if any special powers are not currently being used; wands and the like are considered active if they have been fired within a previous turn.

Spellfire use does not prevent the wielder from also exercising magic if the wielder is a spellcaster; the two do not interfere with each other in any way, though the user can either cast a spell or wield spellfire in a given round, not both. Ongoing spells or unchanged, continuing spellfire releases can occur in the background, following on from previous rounds, without harming or being harmed by the spellfire wielder undertaking the other activity in a particular round.



The spellfire level of a wielder is used exclusively to measure the wielder's control over spellfire. In ascending order, these levels impart the abilities outlined below.

At 1st Level: The wielder can release spellfire only as bolts of flame spraying straight out from one of hand. Only one bolt can be unleashed per round, and the wielder's control over its intensity is shaky. If the player of a player character spellfire wielder states that the character will emit a certain number of spell levels, the DM should roll 1d4, subtract two points from that roll, and apply the resulting modifier (even if it is 0 or a negative number) to the stated spellfire release amount to determine how many spell levels actually erupt. The resulting total must still be within the minimum of one spell level per bolt and the maximum of the wielder's Constitution score. (That is, the roll can never cancel a bolt entirely..)

At this level of spellfire ability, absorption of magical energy from spells, breath weapons, and magical item discharges is involuntary: The character drains any active magic she or he comes into contact with, including useful magic and healing spells. Only rest or nonmagical healing can restore lost hit points to the character. The wielder can neither sense nor drain, either automatically or deliberately, dweomers existing in items or untriggered spells. A lst-level spellfire wielder who snatches a wand from a hostile wizard cannot drain it but can drain its effects as they are emitted from the wand when it is triggered, thus preventing them from manifesting and gaining their energy to be stored in the wielder's body. Stored energy never dissipates without a cause—necessary healing of the wielder, for example—and can remain in the wielder's body for years, if need be.

At 2nd Level: The wielder gains firm control over how many spell levels are in each released spellfire bolt and can now bend, angle, or even turn (around corners) an unleashed bolt, if desired. The bolt must still come from the wielder's hand, and a maximum of one bolt can still be fired per round. Absorption of magic becomes entirely voluntary, but item dweomers and cast-but-not-yet-unleashed spells still remain beyond the wielder's powers of perception and draining.

At 3rd Level: The wielder can either fire a single bolt of spellfire in a round from any body part and apply Dexterity benefits (reaction adjustments) or fire two spellfire bolts per round from the hands only without Dexterity benefits. The spell levels powering each bolt are under the wielder's firm control but can never add up to more than his or her Constitution score. The side effects described under the Body Effects section (earlier in the Spellfire section) are now gained, and the wielder can both see and drain the enchantments on or in quiescent items and untriggered spells.

At 4th Level: The wielder acquires enough precision over spellfire use to perform delicate tasks requiring the release of less than an entire spell level of energy, such as lighting a candle. Though an entire spell level is not actually expended, the unused excess dissipates harmlessly into the surrounding fabric of the Prime Material Plane, not triggering magic or giving energy to items or beings, but resulting in the loss of the entire spell level of energy from the wielder. Spellfire can be released deftly enough to warm or thaw food rather than cook it—or blast it to ash!—and melt ice within a frozen lock without warming the lock too much for it to be comfortably handled.

At this level of spellfire ability, the wielder can for the first time use a beam of spellfire (costing at least one spell energy level per 60 feet in length) to drain energy from a magical item, rather than a direct touch. A successful attack roll is required to make contact with items more than 10 feet from the wielder, and beams can only reach as far as the spellfire wielder can actually see.

At 5th Level: The wielder gains the power to heal with spellfire for the first time, and realizes his or her ability to do so when the character first thinks about using spellfire for healing after this level is reached. Direct flesh-to-flesh touch is required, and each spell level of spellfire expended restores 2 lost hit points to the target creature, who may be the wielder. (Spellfire cannot give a being extra hit points once it is fully healed.) The wielder can, instead of healing, fire either three spellfire bolts per round from the hands with no Dexterity benefits or two spellfire bolts from any extremity with Dexterity benefits.

At 6th Level: The wielder gains precision enough in the hurling of spellfire bolts or the aiming of spellfire beams to deflect missile weapons in a desired direction. Successful attack rolls are required to strike the missiles, and projected missiles such as arrows, crossbow quarrels, and ballista bolts are considered to be AC 2, while hurled weapons such as rocks, spears, and daggers are AC 5. Missile deflections are not precise enough to become attacks rolled for by the spellfire wielder, but they can be treated as grenadelike missiles by the DM at the DM's discretion.

At 7th Level: The spellfire wielder gains the ability to fly at MV 12 (C) by projecting spellfire at the ground and blasting off. An initial liftoff requires burning 10 spell levels and taking no other activity during the round, but flight can be maintained at a cost of one spell level per round thereafter (two if a pronounced change in direction or an evasive maneuver must be performed). If the wielder runs out of stored energy or turns off the flight discharge in midair, she or he falls and suffers normal falling damage. A ground burst intended to slow such a plunge by firing spellfire at the ground just before impact reduces falling damage by 3d6 per spell level expended.

The strain of maintaining flight reduces the spellfire wielder's other activities during flight to nonspellfire activity, two released bolts per round with no Dexterity benefits, or one with Dexterity benefits.

At 8th Level: The wielder gains the ability to make three releases of spellfire in the same round (with Dexterity benefits if blasts are flung), though his Constitution score still governs the total spell levels that can be expended in a round. These uses of spellfire can be very different without sacrificing precision or power; for instance, the wielder can fly, light a flask of oil with one hand, and fire a burst of spellfire from his eyes or knee with Dexterity benefits all in the same round.

At this level, spellfire wielders also become able to drain life energy from living creatures by direct touch. A successful attack roll is required, and a saving throw is allowed to withstand the draining attempt; if it fails, the spellfire wielder takes away one experience level or Hit Die from the being, and gains one spell level of spellfire energy. Note that using this ability on a being that is unconscious, unwilling, mind-controlled, or in any way not freely consenting to donate life energy may be an evil act in many circumstances.

At 9th Level: The wielder gains the ability to summon a *crown of fire*, the most spectacular known manifestation of spellfire. A *crown of fire* is raised by draining the last life force from a sentient living creature who willingly gives up its life—or who fails its saving throw against a hostile draining attempt on its last experience level (and previously, of course, any other experience levels it possessed). Creatures completely drained in this way die, but never rise as undead unless they are governed by previously established contingency magics that assist them in becoming a lich or otherwise achieving artificial—as opposed to natural, spontaneous—undeath.

For the next three rounds, the spellfire wielder must release his or her maximum spellfire energy (his or her Constitution score's worth of spell levels) into a flickering nimbus around himself or herself. She or he can take no other spellfire action during this time or the energy is wasted, and the *crown* cannot form.

On the fourth round, the *crown of fire* appears and a halo of brilliant spellflames encircles the wielder's head. It forms an *anti-magic shell* (as the wizard spell) around the wielder and causes any unenchanted weapon that strikes the wielder to melt away without doing harm. (Magical weapons do their normal damage and can survive being vaporized if they succeed at an item saving throw vs. magical fire.)

The *crown* can be maintained without penalizing other wielder activities (including other spellfire uses, such as flying), so long as the wielder



continues to expend his or her maximum spellfire energy per round on the *crown* and/or other spellfire uses. It can be ended instantly if the wielder wills it, and it dies away automatically at the end of the round in which the wielder runs out of stored energy. If the wielder ends the *crown* before all his or her energy is expended, she or he can (at no extra cost) cause it to destroy itself in a burst that emits nine spellfire bolts. These streaking conflagrations deal 4d6 points of damage each and strike at up to nine different targets of the wielder's choice. They strike at THACO 2, regardless of the wielder's normal THACO.

At 10th Level: The wielder becomes able to irresistibly drain life energy: An attack roll is still required, but victims (unless themselves able to employ spellfire) are not allowed a saving throw to prevent the draining. This allows a spellfire wielder to raise a *crown of fire* by draining an unwilling, hostile foe. The rate of draining does not increase.

At this level, a spellfire wielder also gains the ability to release stationary whirlflames of spellfire from his or her body. These spinning balls of flame as big as the caster's head remain behind (lasting 1 day per spellfire level of their creator) after the wielder has left the vicinity or even the plane. Such whirlflames are created to do two set things—usually to drain any magic or fire that contacts them—and cannot do anything else. They are usually left in doorways or narrow passages in front of a place that must be protected; in this way, a party of injured adventurers could shelter from the breath of an angry red dragon. A whirlflame can only have two tasks, but it can be so precisely controlled as to discharge energy slowly and evenly enough to heat a cave or to cook things without doing any harm or using up all the air. (Spellfire never creates smoke when it melts things, but smoke can come from flammable objects that it sets alight but does not entirely consume.)

If a being comes into contact with a whirlflame (either direct body contact or by passing a held weapon into one), the whirlflame exhausts 1d4 spell levels into the touching being, dealing 1d6 points of damage per level. Whirlflames can in this way be destroyed by repeated contacts with creatures. Missile weapons and other nonliving or undead things do not normally cause a whirlflame discharge, but a whirlflame could be set to destroy just undead creatures or to melt all solid items that come into contact with it.

Magical energy drained by a whirlflame does not prolong its existence—only energy directly bestowed upon it by its creator at a visit subsequent to its creation can do that—but is added to its to-be-discharged energy total. A wielder can have only one whirlflame in existence at a time.

At 11th Level: The wielder gains the ability to transfer spellfire into a magical item to recharge it without harming the item (no saving throws required). Due to the nature of their enchantments, certain sorts of items cannot be renewed. This can only be discovered by trial and error, wherein to-be-transferred spellfire energy dissipates and is lost. Direct contact with the item is necessary, and the spellfire wielder cannot perform any other spellfire activity during the round. Generally, one spell level of spellfire energy equals one item charge, and the wielder can transfer any amount up to and including his or her Constitution score maximum in the round.

At this level, a spellfire wielder also becomes able to have two created whirlllames (with all the properties described in the 10th-level entry) in existence at the same time.

At 12th Level: The wielder gains the ability, if desired, to create whirlflames (as described under the 10th-level entry) that are linked to him or her so that magical energy drained by a whirlflame can be instantly transferred into the spellfire wielder as stored spellfire energy. Such augmentations do not increase the wielder's capacity to store spellfire and can well have harmful effects (see Body Effects and Spellfire Overloading earlier in this Spellfire section). If a whirlflame is destroyed by contact with a physical attack (in other words, by burning a creature making contact with it), the spellfire wielder who created it

also takes 1d4 points of damage through the expiring link—but there is no known means of otherwise harming a spellfire wielder through such a link. The allowable simultaneous whirlflame total remains at two.

At this level, a spellfire wielder also gains the ability to alter the light intensity of spellfire from almost invisible (87% undetectable in darkness and 97% undetectable under average sunlit conditions) to blinding (equal to a blindness spell—including allowing a saving throw vs. spell to prevent its effect—when used on or near creatures that see by means of eyes). Creatures of greater than eight levels or Hit Dice that are blinded gain a saving throw to end this blinding effect at the end of every unsighted day. Also, creatures that use gaze attacks—such as basilisks, beholders, and catoblepas—lose the use of these eye-related powers for the same length of time as they are blinded. Creatures of any level or Hit Dice may be cured of this blindness by a cure blindness or deafness, heal, or regenerate spell, but not by a dispel magic.

At 13th Level: A spellfire wielder gains the ability to control energy transferal from remotely located whirlflames, so that she or he can call on them at will or force them to keep their energy in storage. The allowable simultaneous whirlflame total rises to three.

At this level, a wielder also gains the power to boost spells she or he casts or those cast by another being in bare flesh-to-bare flesh contact with him or her by transferring spellfire energy into the spell. Certain spells cannot be aided, and no saving throw, attack roll, or random-effect-choice alterations can be made in this way, but duration can be extended by 1d3 rounds per spell level of spellfire energy, and damage can be augmented by one die (of whichever dice the spell normally uses) per spellfire spell level. No other spellfire activity can be undertaken while this spellfire use is being performed.

At 14th Level: The wielder gains the ability to create *meteor swarms* by means of spellfire discharge. Each swarm costs nine spell levels and must be fully paid for. A wielder, limited as usual by his or her Constitution score, must possess a current Constitution of 18 to produce two *meteor swarms* in the same round, but there is no other limit to the number of *swarms* that can be hurled in the same round, or how many other spellfire activities can take place during that round. An overall lapse of restriction on spellfire use occurs; a wielder can now undertake as many spellfire effects as she or he can fuel—so a wielder with an 18 Constitution could unleash 18 separate bolts of spellfire causing 1d6 points of damage each at up to 18 separate targets (and apply Dexterity benefits to all of them).

At 15th Level: The wielder gains the ability to simultaneously wield the energy from his or her own previously created whirlflames (only) as well as personally stored spellfire energy. In other words, the whirlflame energy can be controlled and unleashed in the same round as personally stored energy, in addition to the wielder's Constitution score maximum release in a round, and it not counted as personally stored energy, so overloading cannot occur because of it.

Control over whirlflame energy is as precise as over personally stored spellfire energy and must travel through the spellfire wielder. A spellfire wielder cannot cause a whirlflame that is halfway around Toril to discharge spellfire blasts from itself, nor can the wielder see through the whirlflame to observe its surroundings; all spellfire energy must flow instantly from a whirlflame to the spellfire wielder and be discharged from him or her.

In any round in which remote whirlflames are being called upon as well as personally stored energies, no other spellcasting or other activities can be performed by the spellfire user, who must remain stationary.

At this level, a spellfire user willing to do nothing else during the round can also choose to *teleport without error* to the vicinity of any one of his or her whirlflames at a cost of four spell levels of spellfire energy (which must come personally from the spellfire wielder, not from any whirlflame).

At 16th Level and Above: A spellfire wielder becomes able to take along other creatures on such teleport without error trips, which must still



be to a whirlflame created by the wielder. All creatures touching the wielder are transported along with all worn or carried items at a cost of four spell energy levels per being. If this cost exceeds the spellfire wielder's personally stored energy, a randomly chosen being is left behind.

**At 17th Level and Above:** Additional powers gained by such powerful spellfire wielders are as yet unknown.<sup>22</sup>

### Wizshades

All wizards are aware that the wielding of magic is inherently dangerous—and that battling others who can also use magic is deadly indeed. One can end up blasted to nothingness; slain; maimed; rendered undead; forced into charmed slavery; trapped in the shape of a mushroom or something else unable to speak, move, or defend itself; afflicted by a curse; feebleminded; or rendered insane. Some curses combine one or more of these states, often forcing the recipient to sacrifice intelligence and/or life energy every time they use a spell, so that insanity and undeath await unless the individual turns his or her back on magic use forever.

Feeblemindedness is not a loss of Intelligence, but an enforced cessation of thought and perception. There are spells and other attacks, however, that do sap the intellect. Intelligence lost through the use of normal magic sinks the caster into a state of imbecility, and if it progresses far enough, a descent into no more than animal intelligence. Wits<sup>23</sup> lost through wild magic or in a psionic or magical backlash, explosion, or uncontrolled discharge, however, cause a condition known as mindshadow madness.

This little-known affliction is curable by *limited wish, wish,* and *heal* spells, but it makes the victim dangerous to approach, and therefore cures put into effect are few. Mindshadow madness sharpens perceptions and creative thought,<sup>24</sup> but also plunges afflicted persons into a shadowy world of mind images and feelings that stream in at the victim constantly from all of the known planes of existence. The affliction begins instantly, with a short burst of stuttering or the uttering of nonsense words, which is followed by the involuntary casting of a random spell at a random target, and then victims become governed by visions, and their behavior undoubtedly seems odd to those who cannot see what they perceive.

Victims of mindshadow madness need not sleep or memorize spells—magics return to them spontaneously or even come at random to their minds if they had no magic memorized when driven mad. Such spells may be cast without material components or any normal needs for rest, precisely seeing targets, or the like. Proximity to strong magic—either stored in items or enchantments laid on beings, items, or terrain, or recently unleashed in a locale—seem to cause spontaneous spells to come into the minds of the mindshadowed more often.<sup>25</sup>

The alignment of victims shifts to chaotic neutral, and the images confronting them overwhelm the real world, so that they may not recognize friends, foes, or relations—or even fully comprehend their surroundings or situation. Someone who speaks to them is typically perceived as a talking monster of some sort or other or even a source of speech that is constantly shifting shape (usually into various shapes belonging to beasts in the mad wizards' memories or concocted by them in nightmares). In a similar manner, the ground, sky, and such things as trees and buildings are overlaid by slowly shifting images of ruins, other

terrain, floating shrubberies and rooms without buildings around them, and so on. This altered perception seldom seems to cause victims harm by leading them to walk off cliffs or step off roofs, 26 but it does lead to erratic behavior, notably wild spellhurlings at random targets.

An additional danger that the mindshadowed pose is their randomly manifested power of *doubled spell turning*. Whenever any magic comes into contact with mindshadowed people, there is a 2 in 6 chance that it rebounds at double strength (duration and damage) on its source. This is an involuntary power that operates in addition to any spellcasting undertaken by the mindshadowed in the same round.

Priests afflicted by mindshadow madness are often imprisoned in temple walls, doors, or altars by their deity (for others' safety or their own punishment, depending on the circumstances surrounding the madness). They are able to howl, whisper, and otherwise impress unaffected persons, but they are restrained from wielding magic or harming the faithful in other ways. Such "temple spirits" are often freed by the deity to defend holy areas from invaders and those who come to steal or deface, though such defenders can be as deadly to the faithful as to nonbelievers.

Wizards taken by the madness are usually destroyed by their fellows if they become a direct danger to other wizards, cities, or the doings of rulers or cabals of mages. Groups of wizards often make pacts at Mage Fairs to go out to hunt, capture, and cure (or destroy) particular known victims of mindshadow madness, and Harpers and other power groups tend to aid their fellows, but despite such efforts, the majority of wizards afflicted with this madness receive no treatment and either bring about their own deaths through misadventure, leave for other planes at their own behest to suffer unknown fates, or lapse slowly into wizshades.

Long before the origins of wizshades were known, their presence and powers were acknowledged. There is even a body of sorcerous lore that seeks spells to control wizshades with the aim not merely of warding them off or sending them as a wild storm of magic against foes—but of making them one's own army of fearless spell-hurlers! The strange entities known as wizshades are most common in the phlogiston between the crystal spheres that contain worlds, but they can also be encountered anywhere else—including any locale in Toril. They seem attracted to artifacts, magical items of great power (or collections of such enchanted items), wild magic areas, or places where great magical energies have been released.

The mindshadowed become wizshades only slowly. At the end of every month of madness, a d100 roll is made. The initial chance to become a wizshade is 18%, but it increases by 1% for every additional month of madness, plus an additional 1% if the wizshade has caused the death of another being by its magic during that month. Once the roll "succeeds" and the transformation into a wizshade begins, only a full wish can restore the mad victim to a sane, mortal state. During the transformation, the physical body of the victim, along with all worn or carried nonmagical items, dissolves into many-hued mists and swirls away into the upper reaches of the air. Magical items and artifacts actually rise up and then teleport away to random locations all over Faerûn.

Some wizards or priests who have never been afflicted with mindshadow madness also become wizshades in a rare and curious way: If they are turned to stone by magic while carrying powerful magical items or while they have spells memorized, they may (chance unknown) dissolve into the many-colored mists of a nascent wizshade if their petrified form is shattered for any reason.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Elminster: And will remain that way, thank ye very much.

In game terms, this means that a wizard who loses 9 points of Intelligence or more to wild magical causes will succumb (100% chance) to mindshadow madness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Elminster: Victims who do not possess at least 19 points of Intelligence are raised to 19 while afflicted.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> A mindshadow madness victim can never gain more spells than his or her natural capacity. The spells that come to victims are replacements for spells memorized when they lapsed into madness but have since cast. Any vacant spell slots in their memories are filled by random spells; wizards may even gain priest spells and vice versa. Victims of this madness can always cast any spell that comes to them perfectly, even if it is an unfamiliar magic, and material components are never needed. Alignment considerations are ignored, and spells may well be cast at inappropriate or unwise times or targets; prudence seems to be something entirely lacking in mindshadow victims and in their ultimate form, wizshades.

Each round in which a victim of this madness has a vacant spell memorization slot, there is a 2 in 6 chance that a random—or a replacement—spell fills it. This chance rises to 4 in 6 within 60 feet of strong magic and to 5 in 6 if within 90 feet of wild magic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Elminster: The mind seems to recognize terrain dangers and fashion fantastic images that guide the afflicted safely through the purely physical hazards of their surroundings.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any FREQUENCY: Rare ORGANIZATION: Solitary ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any

**DIET:** Magic and phlogiston INTELLIGENCE: Supra-genius (19-20)

TREASURE: Nil

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1 (occasionally 1d4)

ARMOR CLASS: 0

MOVEMENT: 12, FI 24 (C)

HIT DICE: 10 T H A C 0: Nil NO. OF ATTACKS: 0

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 0

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Random wizard spellcasting

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to normal weapons; spells successfully cast at a wizshade have a special effect and do no normal damage; successful magic resistance

against a spell has special results

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 259

SIZE: M (usually 5 to 6 feet tall)

MORALE: Champion (15) XP VALUE: 13,000

A wizshade appears as an undulating, rushing snake of force in the air that slows and widens into a swirling, many-colored vortex about 8 feet in diameter. Out of this (ignoring gravity, such as which direction is down) rises a humanlike form in flowing robes. The form is usually bald and has a long beard, if male, or has a conical hat and long hair, if female. The hat and robes swirl into the vortex and are of the same (usually bright) color— a hue shared with the form's pupilless eyes, which blaze like flames. This form can part from the vortex, walking on air, however, to avoid capture, wizshades seldom leave their vortices.

A wizshade and its vortex are composed of mists akin to the phlogiston, and the vortex is connected to the phlogiston outside the crystal sphere of Realmspace by means of a tunnel no larger than a hair. The tunnel can be traversed by those daring to enter the vortex in order to reach the swirling phlogiston outside Realmspace. A wizshade can sink back into its vortex and depart at will, but the vortex cannot move when the shade has stepped out of it. A vortex collapses if its wizshade is destroyed, and it retreats from the Prime Material plane, taking the wizshade with it, if struck by spells that deal it more than 70 points of dama a g e .

a g e .
Wizshades are whimsical in nature and may use their spells to aid or harm those they encounter. Wizshades speak common or any other frequently encountered tongue (elvish, dwarvish, etc.) when they wish, but their utterance do not often make sense.

Combat: The misty bodies of wizshades offer little resistance to weapons, which pass through them without seemingly doing harm. Wizshades cannot attack physically, and they suffer no damage from physical attacks. Magical weapons deal wizshades their usual damage; all weapon and strength bonuses apply, and wizshades are considered enchanted creatures for damage purposes. However, no special weapon effects (such as vorpal or life-draining properties) function against a spellshade.

Wizhades are creatures of magic, and both do and take harm from magic. They use only wizard spells, can never cast spells on themselves, and wield all spells as instantaneous-effect magics requiring only the final somatic gestures for casting. For each round of combat, roll 1d10. The result is the level of spell the wizshade can cast. (A "10" means the DM chooses the level.) Then roll d100 to determine the spell cast. If the result is higher than the number of spells listed in the *Player's Handbook* for that level, the DM chooses a spell of the appropriate level from any relevant source. Regardless of how inappropriate the spell may be for the situation, the wizshade casts it. Spells that boost a caster's hit points or energy by taking it from a target creature do benefit a wiz-



shade. Wizshades save as a 10th-level wizards or uses their own prewizshade saving throws (whichever are better, provided their prewizshade level and class are known).

Any spell or magical attack successfully cast on a wizshade does no physical damage to the wizshade, but eliminates the equivalent spell level from its use for that combat. In other words, if a *cloudkill* is successfully cast on a wizshade, it cannot cast 5th-level spells for the rest of that combat. If this spell level is rolled for wizshade use in a later combat round, the shade casts no spell that round. A spellshade checks morale at each loss of a spell level; failure means it vanishes back into its vortex and departs.

If a wizshade's magic resistance succeeds against any magical attack, it captures the attacks energy, and suffers no spell level loss. Instead, roll 1d10. If the result is a spell level previously closed to the wizshade, it regains the use of that spell level in future rounds.

Habitat/Society: Wizshades do not vary in powers, but they have a distinct ranking among themselves by color. Hues denote how long a particular wizshade has existed and ascend like a rainbow from violet through indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Wizshades are whimsical, willful, chaotic creatures who seem to delight in teasing others and in spectacular displays of magic. They have no natural allies or foes, but delight especially in annoying powerful wizards, other spell-using, or psionic-using beings when they encounter them. Rumors occasionally surface of extremely rare instances of the appearance of priestly spellshades, but their sightings have never been confirmed.

**Ecology:** Wizshades never carry anything tangible; their garments are part of them. To heal, they absorb phlogiston. It is rumored the most powerful wizshades achieve life in other bodies on other planes or manage to regain their normal physical state and reappear on Toril, not having aged during their time as wizshades.







# Artifacts of the Realms



he Forgotten Realms is a world filled with magic. Its landscape is studded with ruined castles and forgotten crypts filled with powerful magical items. A few items of lore, however, are spoken of in reverent or fearful terms by the bards and stand out from more common

items of magic. These artifacts and relics are distinguished by their uniqueness, their fabled histories, and their powerful impact on the history of the Realms.<sup>1</sup>

As defined in the *Book of Artifacts, artifacts* are powerful magical items that have wizard, priest, or other powers and are made by gods, liches, wizards, and other spellcasters. *Relics* are powerful magical items that have wizard, priest, or other powers, are made by gods and priests, and have some holy importance to a particular faith or temple. Otherwise, the two terms are identical. Throughout this chapter, the term "artifact" refers to both artifacts and relics. "Relic" refers only to that group of artifacts that have holy significance.

Artifacts should not be casually inserted into a campaign. Artifacts are unique and colorful magical items that provide adventure tools for the DM and should be used as such. It is the responsibility of the DM to build on the history of any artifact and to create a memorable story around it. A single adventure or an entire campaign can be constructed around the search for an artifact and dealing with the consequences of its discovery.

This chapter details artifacts unique to the Forgotten Realms. These are by no means the only artifacts to be found in the Realms, but they are some of the most well-known. In addition to the artifacts detailed in the following pages, the Book of Artifacts and the Encyclopedia Magica detail many artifacts which may be found in the Realms. The Monocle of Bagthalos and the Scepter of the Sorcere-Kings were created in Zazesspur and ancient Netheril respectively The Axe of the Dwarven Lords might be found near the Great Rift. Baba Yaga's Hut has been reported near Rashemen. The Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar might be found in the vicinity of Calimshan or Zakhara. Blackhammer's Cutlass is reputed to have originated in Realmspace in the Tears of Selûne. The Book with No End, the Crystal of the Ebon Flame, the Horn of change, the Orbs of Dragonkind, the Regalia of Might, the Throne of the Gods, and many other items of lore all might have originated in or been transported to the Realms.

The Book of Artifacts also discusses several artifacts which may be found outside the core lands of the Realms. The Hammer of Gesen and the Iron Bow of Gesen both originated in the Hordelands. Artifacts unique to Zakhara include the All-Knowing Eye of Yasmin Sira, the Coin of Jisan the Bountiful, and the Seal of Jafar al-Samal. From the ancient lands of Kara-Tur have sprung many legendary artifacts including the Acorn of Wo Mai, the Death Rock, the Herald of Mei Lung, and the Ivory Chain of Pao.

Several additional artifacts found the Forgotten Realms also appear in the *Encyclopedia Magica*. These include the *Ankh of Life*, the *Arm of Doom*, the *Chariot of Re (Ra)*, *Delzoun's Fist*, *Demonbane*, the *Font of Time*, the *Galley of the Gods*, and the *Stone Scepter of Shih*. Many artifacts wielded by the gods, such as those detailed in the *Faiths & Avatars* sourcebook, appear in the Realms for short (from a

god's point of view) periods of times. Although not detailed here, these include the Silver-Hafted Axe of Grond Peaksmasher, Annam's Sky Cleaver, Selune's Wand of Four Moons and many others. Numerous other artifacts are mentioned in the two comics series<sup>2</sup> set in the Realms, including the Astrolabe of Nimbral, the Axe of Relandal, the Book of Mystra, the Bow of Burning Gold, the Chalice of Dreams (also known as the Cup of Dragons), the Claw of Malar, the Cup of Crimson Wonder, the Dragon's Eye, the Eye of Selûne, the Feet of Ilmater, the Hand of Vaprak, the Horn of Graystone, the Horn of Valos, Karpierz's Charming Companion, the Moonpenguin of Boof; the Timepiece of Dragons, the Shield of Mitrak, and the Ruby Elephant of Calimshan. Finally, there are artifacts whose use is restricted to a specific family or clan (such as the Wyvern's Spur), which have been destroyed (such as the Crystal Chain of Binding of ancient Netheril which was destroyed by the Magister in Athalantar when Elminster was a young lad), or which have been taken out of circulation (such as the Dragonking's Eye).

As detailed in the Book of Artifacts, all artifacts share certain features in common. These properties generally conceal and protect the artifact, placing them outside the normal rules for magical items. Briefly, these features are as follows: All artifacts are unique; they radiate only dim power to a detect magic spell and the type of magic is never revealed; they are immune to detect evil, identify, know alignment, or locate object spells; legend lore or contact other plane spells never reveal an artifact's location or more than cryptic answers to questions about its powers; they are immune to physical or magical harm, except by a few specific means; and their effects are permanent. Note that artifacts that cast spells do so with a casting time of 3 (the initiative modifier for miscellaneous magical items) unless they fit the description for another type of magical item (for rings, a casting time of 3; rods, 1; staves, 2; or wands, 3), and they cannot be disrupted in the midst of performing the spell function like a spellcaster can. They also cast all spells as a 20th-level cleric or mage (unless otherwise specifically noted).

## Beacon of Light

The *Beacon of Light* is a golden, 1-foot-square cube with silver cylinders extending from the top at the four corners. Each face of the cube is engraved with an ancient hieroglyphic of unknown origin or meaning

## History

When Ptah led the avatar of Re and his descendants to Realmspace aboard the *Matet* (the great boat of the sun), he steered them through the dark depths of space by the light of a golden cube. After disembarking, Re kept the magical beacon in order to summon Ptah if his family ever needed Ptah's services again.

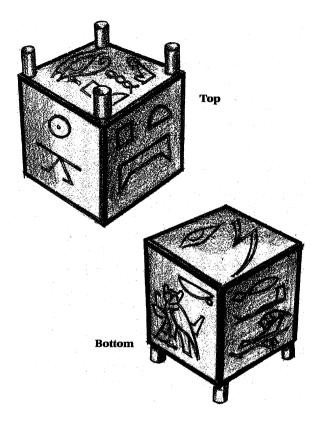
Centuries later, when Re guided the Mulan people out of the ruined wasteland that was the Imaskari Empire to the shore of the Alamber Sea, he led them with the *Beacon of Light*. With the founding

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Elminster: To avoid Volo's extremely speculative and wildly inaccurate rantings in this chapter, I rewrote this entire piece in much more useful (to the reader) AD&D game terms. Enjoy!

<sup>2</sup> These series went out of production years are and are now largely unavailable except through collectors and individual to the reader.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> These series went out of production years ago and are now largely unavailable except through collectors and individual comics retailers. Mention is made of them here for completeness's sake, but no items discussed in the comic books are essential to an ongoing FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign.





The Beacon of Light

of Skuld, City of Shadows, the *Beacon* was placed in the vaults of the Temple of Re and forgotten over the course of a millennium.

After Re was slain by the orc deity Gruumsh in the Battle of the Gods during the Orcgate Wars, he bequeathed his divine power to Horus who then became Horus-Re. During the consolidation of the two priesthoods, the *Beacon of Light* was rediscovered and placed in a tower at the end of the sea wall in the city of Skuld to serve as a magical lighthouse beacon.

Centuries later, during Thay's second invasion of Mulhorand, a daring pirate raid on Skuld, instigated by the Red Wizards (who promised great bounty), resulted in a great fire which destroyed much of the docks. During this attack, the *Beacon* disappeared and has not been seen since by the god-kings of Mulhorand.

### Campaign Use

The *Beacon of Light* is buried in the ruins of an abandoned lighthouse on the easternmost tip of the tiny island of Sarr on the south edge of the Pirate Isles. The *Beacon* is sacred to the god-kings of Mulhorand. It is particularly important to the clergy of Anhur, whose faith was blamed for its loss by the priests of Horus-Re. Adventurers locating the device who do not return it to the city of Skuld will be pursued by agents of the temple of Anhur, possibly including Chessentan mercenaries or even the Statues That Walk. Eventually, possession of the *Beacon of Light* should involve adventurers in the power struggle between the temples of Anhur and Horus-Re in Mulhorand.

Legend lore reveals the purpose of the Beacon and the command words used to control it, but not its history or importance. Those who handle it for extended periods may receive random visions of the past surroundings of the Beacon. By coincidence, the artifact bears a superficial resemblance to a gilded coffer stolen from the Sceptanar of Chessenta several decades ago; possessors who display it too openly in public or to would-be buyers may find themselves the targets of the Sceptanar's agents (beginning with know-nothing hired mercenaries sent to test the strength of those holding the "coffer" and progressing up to quite skilled adventurer agents).

### Powers

**Invoked.** The Beacon of Light can shine across the sea for miles through clouds and rain, providing a clear signal to any ship regardless of weather. The Beacon is activated by stating a command word and with another word is deactivated. The Beacon may only be activated for six hours each day, but that would provide assured safety to any port in the Realms during the worst of storms.

The Beacon can be used to summon the avatar of Ptah (a power known and worshiped in Realmspace but not the Realms). This requires holding the artifact above one's head with the Beacon activated and shouting the name of the Opener of the Ways three times. Ptah is under no compulsion to obey or act in accordance with the wishes of the summoner unless he so chooses.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

The Beacon of Light must be wrapped in the cloak of Shar.

The Beacon must be enveloped in a pack of skriaxits led by a great skriax for one full century.

The Beacon will shatter if the avatars of Horus-Re and Anhur ever come to blows

# Blood of Lathander

This unique minor artifact of Lathander consists of four drops of an avatar of the gods blood imprisoned in an oval, fist-sized piece of amber.

### History

Centuries ago Mystra selected the archmage Sammaster as one of her Chosen. Overwhelmed by the power invested in him, he developed delusions of godhood and set himself up as a seer. His teachings that "dead dragons shall rule the world entire" started the Cult of the Dragon. Sammaster and the cultists then set out to fulfill this prophecy by creating dracoliches and serving them by bringing them treasure.

The Harpers tracked down the corrupted archmage and destroyed many of his followers. Unable to defeat one of Mystra's Chosen, Harper priests of the Morninglord called upon their god. An avatar of Lathander appeared and challenged Mystra's fallen Chosen to battle, outraged by the thought of the unchanging eternity of tyranny the archmage promised. The Morninglord's avatar destroyed Sammaster, but not before the wizard delivered a severe wound. (Sammaster was capable of attacking the deity successfully due to his investiture with some of Mystra's divine essence.)



Four drops of Lathander's blood fell to the ground, where they were gathered up by a priest of the Morninglord from the village of Hap and placed in an amber flask for safe-keeping. Their magical nature fused the flask into a seamless form. During the battle, many Harpers were slain as well as most of the cultists, and in the confusion the newly created relic was largely overlooked. It has languished ever since in Hap, forgotten by most of Lathander's clergy

### Campaign Use

The Blood of Lathander currently resides within Lathander's Open Hand, a small temple to the Morninglord located in the tiny village of Hap in Battledale. The energetic new priestess of that temple, Dawnmaster Cathalandra Dovaer, employs the Blood to aid adventurers active in the area in quests favored by the Morninglord. If the Morninglord determines the artifact is needed elsewhere, player characters might be called upon to escort the Blood to another site and protect it against the attacks of groups such as the Cult of the Dragon.

### Powers

**Constant.** The Blood flies (usually floating motionless) and glows with a rosy radiance at Lathander's will. The glow within the amber varies at the pleasure of the god, from gentle to near-blinding. If it pleases Lathander to do so, the Blood can signal his approval or disapproval by pulsing in irregular flashes when a priest of the Morninglord asks a question of him or takes a particular action in its presence.

**Invoked.** In the hands of a priest or paladin of Lathander only, the artifact can cure critical wounds four times a day and raise dead once a day. Once every second day it can regenerate a lost limb or organ and bestow restoration as the spell.

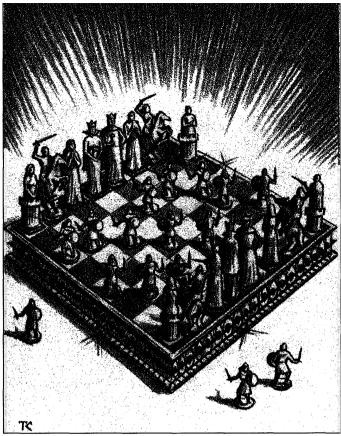
To call on its powers, the priest or paladin must touch the Blood. Thereafter it flies about in response to his or her will and must be directed to touch a being and function for the healing powers to act on that being. If two of Lathander's faithful strive against each other to control the Blood, it hangs motionless.

The Blood of Lathander can also detect lie, identify, or positively confirm a devotion to Lathander in a being who claims to worship the Morninglord when a priest (only) of Lathander holds it, touches it to a being or item, and wills it to do one of these things.

Curse. If handled or moved by someone not of the Morninglord's faith, the Blood of Lathander pulses in extremely bright, irregular flashes (brighter than a continual light spell) designed to make its carrier release it or to draw attention to its presence. If it is carried about by such a being, the bearer's dreams are haunted by images of slowly dripping blood—drops of blood that turn to fire and blaze away before they strike the ground. If a nonworshiper of Lathander continues to carry it for more than three days, it begins blazing with a bright light and heating up like metal affected by a heat metal spell; however, once is reaches searing heat in the third round, it stays that hot until discarded by the unauthorized bearer, whereupon it returns to ambient temperature in three rounds.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

If the amber is broken, the divine blood blazes away into nothingness instantly. It cannot be captured by a wizard or alchemist.



The Chessmen of Ultham-Urre

- The amber must be crushed in the jaws of the eldest surviving dracolich of the Realms.
- The amber must be placed within a dead magic area for 99 years, whereupon it disintegrates.
- The amber must be crushed beneath the boot of an avatar of Talos or in the fist of the reigning god of the dead.

## Chessmen of UlTham-Urre

The *Magical Chessmen* of *Ultham-Urre* are a complete set of 32 enchanted chess pieces carved from rare minerals and inlaid with gemstones found predominantly in the Hills of Maerth. Each Chessman is carved from luspeel to give it a faint magnetic attraction to a steel chessboard. The green set is inlaid with tiny beljurils, while the red set is inlaid with miniature jacinths. Each piece is unique and depicts a lifelike sculpture of a Chessentan citizen. The Chessmen range in height from 2 inches to 6 inches, proportionate to the strength of the piece.

### History

The Magical Chessmen of Ultham-Urre were created by Ultham, son of Urrekanam, in the early days of Chessenta during the reign of Ring Tchazzar. Ultham was a powerful archmage whose slender tower stood amidst the Hills of Maerth. A fairly pleasant man for a wizard,



he had a great fondness for the small trading village of Oslin, located on the eastern shores of the Akanamere, and spent many happy hours there playing chess with the village elders.

Some sages speculate that Ultham predicted the rapid dissolution of Chessenta into rival city-states and the accompanying strife, but the truth is lost to history. Regardless, before he disappeared to wander the planes, the wizard left a priceless legacy known as the *Magical Chessmen of Ultham-Urre* to safeguard his friends in the nearby village.

The *Chessmen* served as simple playing pieces for several years until the lord of neighboring Maerduuth, then a large city on par with Akanax, decided to annex the small village. Since the village of Oslin was made up of farmers, fishermen, and merchants, no one expected them to have the skills to fight off a brigade of troops or the resources to hire any mercenaries. The first expeditionary force was routed by a fierce company of warriors backed up with powerful wizards and priests. The second expeditionary force never returned. There was no third expeditionary force, and Oslin was ignored by the surrounding military powers for many years thereafter.

Several decades later, a well-armed caravan carrying a fortune in gems from Unthalass to Akanax vanished on the road between Oslin and Maerduuth. The sole survivor told of an ambush by a glittering company of armored knights. Investigators discovered that half of the population of Oslin had vanished overnight, and neither they, the *Chessmen*, nor the gems were ever seen again. Since that time, bereft of its magical defense, Oslin has had to defend itself with mercenary companies such as the Lords of the Inner Reach.

The *Chessmen* have never been reported found, although various rumors have placed them throughout the Realms. It is known that an adventurer named Wilund traded the *Alcaister* spell tome to the sage Ardagundus of Baldur's Gate for information on their whereabouts, but whether he had any success in tracking them down is unknown. One story claims that a woman in the Company of Crazed Venturers used the *Chessmen* to make a daring escape from a noble's mansion, but this is probably apocryphal.

### Campaign Use

The Magical Chessmen of Ultham-Urre might be found nearly anywhere in the Realms and are suitable for use by player characters for a short period of time. It is suggested that one of the pieces mysteriously disappears very quickly after the set is discovered, with the consequences detailed below (under Curse). Simply tracking down the Chessmen will involve numerous adventures seeking out arcane bits of lore. Determining the appropriate command words will require another entire set of adventures, and then hanging on to them when word gets out that they have been recovered will be next to impossible.

### Powers

**Constant.** Each piece inlaid with jacinths acts as a ring of fire resistance when gripped within one's fist. Similarly, each piece inlaid with beljurils acts as a ring of lightning resistance.

**Invoked.** Each Chessman has two command words, and the command words are identical for every piece. Invoking any of the powers takes one full round of complete concentration (similar to casting a spell) and can be disrupted by a successful attack.

When any Chessman (except for one of the four rooks) is held within a clenched fist by a human, demihuman, or humanoid and the

first command word invoked, the bearer is temporarily transformed into an adventurer of a certain level and class and the piece vanishes. All preexisting class-based (and kit-based) skills are temporarily lost except for nonweapon proficiencies. This includes spell use, weapon proficiency or specialization, etc. Some of the green pieces also impose certain alignment restrictions that must be adhered to while employing the piece. The spell selection of priests and mages is fixed, as are the weapon proficiencies of the new class, as determined by the DM.

It is not possible to employ a different Chessman while in a transformed state. The transformation lasts for one hour, until the bearer repeats the command word, or until the bearer dies. When the transformation is reversed, the bearer returns to his or her original class and level with the benefit of a heal spell, and the chess piece reappears in the bearer's hand. This transformative power can be invoked once per 24-hour period. The level and class associated with each piece are as follows:

Piece	Level and Class
Red pawn	3rd-level thief
Red rook	See below
Red knight	9th-level fighter
Red bishop	9th-level cleric
Red king	15th-level fighter
Red queen	15th-level mage
Green pawn	3rd-level fighter
Green rook	See below
Green knight	9th-level ranger
Green bishop	9th-level druid
Green king	15th-level ranger
Green queen	15th-level mage

When a rook is held and the command word uttered, the rook transforms into an instant fortress. (See Daern's instant fortress in the DUNGEON MASTER *Guide* or the *Encyclopedia Magica*, but unlike that version, a magical rook repairs all damage suffered between transformations.) This form can be maintained indefinitely until anyone inside the tower repeats the command word, at which point the fortress reappears in the form of a rook in the original bearer's fist.

Each Chessman also contains an extradimensional space similar in size and function to the largest size of *bag of holding* (for pawns) or the largest size of *bag of holding* (for all other pieces). When a nonliving item is held in contact with a chess piece and the second command word is invoked, the item vanishes into the extradimensional space associated with that piece. If the command word is spoken again while a piece is held (and no nonliving matter is in contact with the piece), one random item reappears in close proximity to the Chessman. Hence the more items stored in the extradimensional space, the longer it may take to recover any particular item.

If an extradimensional space is full, nothing happens when an attempt is made to store an additional item. If an extradimensional space is empty, one random nonliving item from the nearby vicinity is transported into the extradimensional space as a result of the unsuccessful attempt to remove an item. It is impossible to place any of the Magical Chessmen into an extradimensional space, and attempts to put an item such as a bag of holding or portable hole into a Chessman have no effect. It is also impossible to place a chess piece within another chess piece.

Ultham originally stored an appropriate set of armor, weapons, equipment and spell components in each of the nonrook pieces and



nonperishable food and water in the rooks. Some of this equipment was reputed to be magical. However, sages generally agree that most of the original gear has been long since lost, and almost anything or nothing at all could be found in any of the *Chessmen* now.

Curse. Although not truly cursed, the *Magical Chessmen* of *Ultham-Urre* do have an unusual property that makes them difficult to hold on to. Somehow the enchanted luspeel is magnetically attracted to concentrations of magical steel that it is not attuned to. Hence, if a warrior bears a suit of magical armor or a magical sword and carries a *Chessman* on his or her person, the chess piece slowly (over the course of three or four days) becomes attuned to those items of magic, and thereafter ignores them. But if a priest bearing an enchanted shield that the chess piece has never been in close proximity to should happen to pass by there is a 1% chance per chess piece carried that one *Chessman* teleports to the vicinity of the new concentration of magical steel. (For example, it might appear in the priest's satchel or backpack.) Nothing happens if the priest already bears one or more *Chessmen*.

Thereafter, every hour another random piece appears on the priest's person, no matter what physical or magical safeguards might be employed by the original owners. This quasimagnetic property ensures that the *Magical Chessmen* are never separated for extended periods of time. If an inorganic item is tied, strapped, or wrapped around one of the chess pieces it when it makes this journey, it may or may not accompany the piece—but living things or items bearing a dweomer never make such a journey.

In addition to this "curse," extracting random items from any particular chess piece can be quite risky, as previous owners may have stored nearly anything in the extradimensional space.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Magical Chessmen must be animated and forced to battle each other (red vs. green) in a deific chess match between the demipowers Torm and the Red Knight. The entire set vanishes permanently upon completion of the game unless there is a stalemate.
- The red set of the Magical Chessmen must be employed by a force
  of tanar'ri and forced to battle the green set employed by a force
  of baatezu as part of the Blood War. The entire set vanishes permanently upon completion of the battle, no matter who wins.

## Crenshinibon The Crystal Shard

*Crenshinibon the Crystal Shard* is an ancient relic of chaos and evil. This vile artifact appears as a 1-foot-long, four-sided, pulsating crystal that is tapered like an icicle.

### History

The *Crystal Shard* was forged by a conclave of seven liches millennia ago in a distant crystal sphere. The forging consumed the seven; Crenshinibon stole the magical strength that preserved their undeath to fuel its own first flickers of life. A tanar'ri lord, Errtu, was present at the creation of Crenshinibon, but was hurled back to the Abyss by the burst of power that heralded the artifact's coalescence. Errtu pre-

sumed the crystal had not survived that explosion until it stumbled across the shard's trail centuries later with the discovery of a crystal tower, *Cryshal-Tirith*, whose pulsating heart was the exact image of the Crystal Shard. In the interim, Crenshinibon had molded countless bearers into iron-fisted tyrants and orchestrated military onslaughts to deliver its purpose of destruction in many worlds. Before the fiend could recover the relic, it was seized by Al Dimeneira, a solar of the Upper Planes. Errtu was banished to the Abyss by the aasimon, but the angelic being could not destroy the *Crystal Shard*. It burned his skin terribly, and he was forced to hurl the relic across the planes, hoping it would never be found.

Crenshinibon came to rest in the snow of a bowl-shaped dell deep in the northern mountain range on Toril known as the Spine of the World. There it lay for centuries, sought for its strength by many evil lords, including Errtu-but found by none. The Crystal Shard was eventually discovered in the Year of the Crown (1351 DR) by a weak-willed apprentice wizard by the name of Akar Kessel who stumbled across the relic after being left to die in the snowy wastes by his erstwhile allies, several wizards of the Hosttower of the Arcane in Luskan. Under Crenshinibon's influence, Kessel gathered a servitor army of goblinkin, trolls, and giants. Errtu had noticed a surge of power in the Realms hinting at the artifact's location and eventually managed to take advantage of a faulty summoning to the Prime Material Plane to arrive in Icewind Dale and seize the artifact. Kessel, warned of the fiend's impending arrival by Crenshinibon, convinced Errtu to serve as his general with the promise that the tanar'ri lord could seize the relic after the human died of old age-a relatively short amount of time to the immortal Errtu.

Spurred by the Shard's malignant intelligence, the self-styled "Tyrant of Icewind Dale" then turned his army against the humans of the Ten Towns and the dwarves of Clan Battlehammer in his bid to carve out an empire. Kessel and his army were eventually defeated by the humans and dwarves of the region with the aid of several adventurers who later formed the Company of the Hall. Crenshinibon was buried under half the snow on Kelvin's Cairn, entombed with the late, unlamented Kessel by an avalanche of its own creation.

### Campaign Use

The *Crystal Shard* is endowed with an utterly evil, power-craving intelligence that serves the cause of pure chaos. It is still actively sought by many fiends of the Lower Planes, including Errtu, though that tanar'ri lord has been exiled from the Prime Material Plane after its defeat by Drizzt Do'Urden. Any of these evil beings will seek out the artifact if an opportunity presents itself.

Although Crenshinibon was defeated, it was hardly destroyed or even particularly well-hidden. A skilled wizard employing widely known spells could locate the Crystal Shard and retrieve it from its icebound tomb. Alternatively, the heat radiated by the artifact might cause it to slowly sink through the snow until it falls into a deep-running stream. Fate might then bear the artifact into the Underdark to be discovered by some powerful denizen of the Land Below. If the finder bears the artifact south, it could reappear in the hands of a subterranean tyrant anywhere in the Realms. Player characters might then be forced into confronting the rapid rise of an empire in the depths that threatens the surrounding surface world—for Crenshinibon needs exposure to the sun to employ most of its powers.



### Powers

Crenshinibon is an enigma: a force of darkest evil that draws its strength from that which good-aligned beings find most precious—the light of day. For every hour of daylight the Crystal Shard (or Cryshal Tirith if it contains the artifact) is directly exposed to the light of the sun, Crenshinibon absorbs 12 power levels of energy. The artifact can store a maximum of 144 power levels at any one time, and additional exposure to the sun has no effect. Every two hours, Crenshinibon slowly loses two power levels. (The energy simply dissipates.)

The relic burns power levels to create spell effects at its bearer's will at a cost of one power level per level of a spell effect. Although spell effects can be maintained at night, no new spell effects may be created by the relic while the sun is completely below the horizon. When spells are cast, the ambient light of the sun diminishes as the relic actually steals its radiance.

*Crenshinibon* is sentient, with an effective Intelligence of 19, Wisdom of 18, and Charisma of 18. It is 100% magic resistant and immune to psionics and physical attacks. The relic prefers weak, indecisive bearers as they are easier to dominate. It desires to conquer and command and has an insatiable hunger for absolute power.

**Constant.** *Crenshinibon* burns any creature of good alignment who physically touches it with bare skin for 1d10 points of damage per round. Even while wearing leather or metal gauntlets, a goodaligned bearer suffers 1d6 points of damage per round.

The ultimate perversion of light, *Crenshinibon* radiates warmth with an ambient temperature of approximately 80° Fahrenheit. It provides the benefits of a *ring of warmth* to anyone holding it in direct contact with his or her skin.

**Invoked.** The bearer of the *Crystal Shard* can create and maintain magical towers known as *Cryshal-Tirith* at a cost of 24 power levels per day. A tower is created from a duplicate of the *Crystal Shard* that splits off from the actual artifact and expands into a gigantic edifice when the bearer (or someone she or he gives the duplicate shard to) invokes it with the command "Ibssum dal abdur." These incredible fortresses can serve as a shelter and home for those who dare to wield the artifact. Each *Cryshal-Tirith* can *teleport without error* (itself and all items and beings within it) at a cost of 12 power levels at the will of the bearer of the *Crystal Shard*, who also chooses the destination.

Each incarnation of *Cryshal-Tirith* has four palatial square-walled floors constructed of smooth, strong crystal. The first is entered via a dark hallway and serves as the main chamber of the tower and guard post. Stairs lead up from the back of the chamber to a small platform. A secret door hides a second stair that continues up to the second floor, a comfortably adorned sleeping chamber. A stair leads to a landing opening onto the third floor of the tower. This room, known as the Hall of Scrying, is filled with numerous magical scrying devices, including dozens of mirrors, and a grand crystal throne. A small ladder leads to the fourth floor which houses the *Crystal Shard* (or a duplicate) and a single mirror. The relic (or duplicate) levitates in the center of this small chamber, powering *Cryshal-Tirith* and any other spell effects employed by the bearer.

Cryshal-Tirith and its occupants are invulnerable to all forms of external magical, psionic, or physical attack. No magical or psionic effect cast within Cryshal-Tirith can affect the bearer of Crenshinibon unless she or he so desires. All spell effects cast at the tower are reflected back at the caster. Only a creature not native to the plane on which Cryshal-Tirith is currently located or those allowed by the bearer of Crenshinibon (or by the artifact itself) can locate the

entrance to the tower—an invisible door opening onto the first floor of the tower.

The bearer of the *Crystal Shard* can destroy any *Cryshal-Tirith* at will. The tower then collapses into a mound of black stonework that slowly disintegrates into dust. This also occurs precipitously if the artifact runs out of power levels. Anyone trapped in a tower during its destruction is instantly crushed to death.

Both *Cryshal-Tirith* and the *Crystal Shard* can pulse with a burst of blinding light that temporarily blinds any sighted creature who observes the pulse for 1d6 rounds. This ability does not cost any power levels. The *Crystal Shard* also, without draining power levels, functions as a maximum strength *ring of telekinesis*.

*Crenshinibon* enables its owner to cast numerous spell effects as an 18th-level wizard. Spell effects issue from the bearer if *Cryshal-Tirith* is not close by, but otherwise issue from the tower itself. All spell effects (except for those of the enchantment/charm school) appear as a ray of blindingly bright light.

The *Crystal Shard* can act as a powerful instrument of destruction. Its bearer can cast any offensive wizard spell from the school of invocation/evocation at a cost of one power level per spell level. All such spells have unlimited range, but are effectively limited by the horizon.

The relic can also serve as a means of manipulation; its bearer can cast any enchantment/charm spell at a cost of one power level per spell level. In addition, the *Crystal Shard* serves as a *rod of ruler-ship* for its bearer without needing charges. Few bearers have known that every 10 successful uses of the wizard spell *domination* through *Crenshinibon's* magic permanently lower both their Wisdom and Intelligence by 1 point.

Crenshinibon can act as a powerful tool for scrying. The magical mirrors located on the fourth floor of Cryshal-Tirith function as crystal balls. The bearer of the Crystal Shard can cast any wizard spell from the schools of lesser or greater divination or employ the rod of rulership functions through the mirrors at a cost of one power level per spell level.

If a mirror is removed from *Cryshal-Tirith*, it can function as a two-way communication device between the bearer of the *Crystal Shard* in the mirror room of *Cryshal-Tirith* and anyone who stands in front of the remote mirror. Simply standing in front of the mirror alerts a bearer of the *Crystal Shard* that communication is requested. By stepping through a tower mirror, it is possible for the owner to travel to a remote mirror.

The shard also facilitates magical transportation of a more conventional sort. Its bearer can cast any wizard translocational spell of 8th level or less (as adjudicated by the DM), including *dimension door, teleport, teleport without error,* and *gateway* at a cost of one power level per spell level.

Curse. Initially *Crenshinibon* communicates with its bearer via subconscious suggestions in a fashion similar to the 5th-level wizard spell *dream* (or its reverse, *nightmare*). After 1d4+1 years of molding its owner's personality and goals, *Crenshinibon* can communicate silently to its owner while she or he is awake. Although the relic cannot force its bearer to sleep, it can cast *suggestion* on its bearer as an 18th-level wizard at will. These spell effects can affect the bearer of the *Crystal Shard* regardless of any normal immunities. While the bearer is awake, she or he has a normal saving throw vs. spell, but while asleep his or her saving throw suffers a -6 penalty.

Crenshinibon's "suggestions" always advance its plans to foment chaos and evil and to extend its dominion over a larger and larger area. Effectively Crenshinibon can force its bearer to do anything it



wishes through repeated use of *suggestion* spells. Finally, *Crenshini-bon* chooses its bearer and cannot be coerced to perform any task—it can reject and withhold its powers from a bearer if it decides to.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- Crenshinibon can only be smashed by the fist of Tyr or some other lawful and good greater power.
- Cnenshinibon can be destroyed by seven good-aligned archliches
  and a powerful assimon who rediscover the ritual used to create the
  relic and reverse the casting. This process results in the destruction
  of all the archliches and the banishment of the assimon.
- Crenshinibon can be shattered if it is wrapped in the dark cloak
  of Shar and hurled into the center of the sun by an avatar of
  Amaunator.

## Crown of Horns

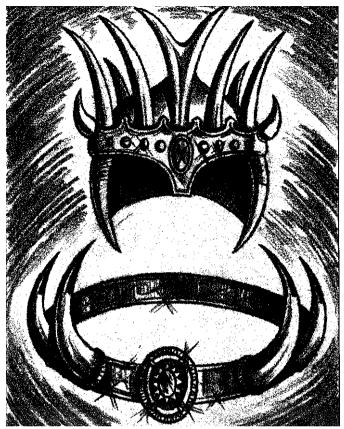
The Crown of Horns, in its original form, was an electrum helm fully covered with small horns with a row of black gems around its edge; since its reformation, the Crown is an electrum circlet with four bone horns mounted around its edge and one large black diamond centered over the wearer's brow. While black as obsidian, the stone is translucent, and weird energy dances within the faceted gem.

### History

The *Crown of Horns* is a major artifact of the Realms, and legends give it a prominent role in Netheril's downfall. Created by Myrkul, the god of the dead, the *Crown of Horns* was lost for centuries after the dissolution of the Netherese empire until found by Laeral Silverhand and the Nine. Donning the *Crown*, Laeral fell under its influence swiftly, and she attacked former friends and allies, including the Harpers.

Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun saved Laeral from an awful fate when, with Mystra's aid and the sacrifice of some of his own power, he fought Laeral in a spell battle that destroyed a large part of the High Forest's interior. (The forest is restored, but many strange, magical effects linger as legacies of the battle.. In the end, Khelben destroyed the *Crown of Horns*, reducing it to pieces. Now in the role of caregiver, Khelben collected the wild Laeral (driven mad by the *Crown's* destruction) and returned to Blackstaff Tower in Waterdeep. Over time, Laeral recovered her wits and beauty, and she and Khelben grew closer. Today, the power of these mages is insignificant compared to their love. Laeral is officially treated as the Blackstaff's consort, and she equals him in status in Waterdeep.

After its destruction, Khelben collected the many shards of the *Crown of Horns* and carefully stored them within Blackstaff Tower for safekeeping (and to prevent the priesthood of Myrkul from gaining any power from it). With Myrkul's destruction during the Time of Troubles, Khelben and Laeral thought the threat of the *Crown* was over. However, when his avatar was slain, Myrkul used his lingering power to send his mind toward the greatest remaining concentration of his power in the Realms. Given his proximity to Blackstaff Tower, his essence forced its way into Khelben's vault where the *Crown of Horns* lay in pieces. Myrkul's divinity and much of his former might was granted to Cyric (and later to Kelemvorl by Ao, but Myrkul was not fully destroyed, and his last vestiges of energy slowly restored his



The Crown of Horns: original (top) and reformed (bottom).

unholy artifact to contain his personality and memories. After a decade of marshaling its strength, the *Crown of Horns* has been remade into a new, powerful form that is not just an artifact but a vessel of a dead god's essence, wholly controlled by the mind of Myrkul, fallen god of the dead.

Once the artifact in its new form was complete, Myrkul teleported the *Crown of Horns* to many places, using his hosts to create shadowrath servants. (While many believe shadowraths to be a new form of undead, a few erudite sages recognize them from times long lost.) Spending a year teleporting to his former sites of worship, Myrkul has kept his existence quiet, but has had the *Crown*-wearers spread rumors among the Cyricists about the *Crown* and how it could aid the worship of Cyric. Myrkul actually enjoys his new existence and the ability to foment dissent, chaos, and death without the strictures inherent in being one a god. His greatest satisfaction is in destroying the organization of Cyric-worshippers and in defeating or killing any worshipers of Mystra (who caused Myrkul's destruction) who cross his path. Myrkul would love to cause major strife in Waterdeep's temple to Mystra, but he knows the power of Khelben and the other wizards of Waterdeep and so dares not risk another conflict with him so soon.

### Campaign Use

For now, the *Crown of Horns* rests on the brow of Nhyris D'Hothek, a pureblooded yuan-ti who is becoming a growing power in Skullport. Myrkul bides his time within this host, relishing the unique evils and dangers of the subterranean port city.



Given the power of the *Crown of Horns* to disrupt a company of adventurers as powerful as the Nine, it is probably unwise to tempt player characters with its power. Having characters pursue a succession of Crown-wearers and attempt to foil Myrkul's evil plots can provide a continuous stream of adventures throughout a group's adventuring career.

### Powers

While powerful in its first incarnation, the might of the *Crown of Horns* has only increased in the past decade, its powers and abilities derived from Myrkul's essence.

**Constant.** The *Crown of Horns* surrounds the wearer with an aura similar to the magical aura of a lich; as such, creatures of fewer than 5 Hit Dice (or 5th level) who view the *Crown's* wearer make a successful saving throw vs. spell or flee in terror for 5d4 rounds. The *Crown's* wearer is immune to necromantic and necromancy spells and death magic, automatically ignoring any ill effects of such spells and being affected by beneficial effects only when desired.

**Invoked.** The Crown's wearer commands undead as a 6th-level priest or at six levels higher than his or her current level, if already a priest. The *Crown's* wearer also can *teleport without error* once every 10 days. This power affects only the *Crown-* wearer, not other creatures in contact with him or her.

The *Crown's* first major power is its *ray of undeath*, a dark energy ray that erupts from the black diamond (maximum of one *ray/turn*) to cover a conical area 40-feet long and 10-feet wide at the base. Any creatures in this area of effect must make a successful saving throws vs. death magic or die; successful saving throws prevent immediate death, but beings still suffer 4d12 points of damage from the necromantic energy. If slain by the *ray of undeath*, any characters rise from the dead as lesser shadowraths under the total control of the *Crown*-wearer.

The second major power of the *Crown* is *Myrkul's Hand*. Similar to the power granted to his specialty priests, *Myrkul's Hand* surrounds the wearer's hands with black flames for four rounds and can only be summoned once per day. If *Myrkul's Hand* touches any living being that being must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic. If successful, the being resists and only takes 1d12 points of damage; if the saving throw fails, the character dies, consumed by black flames. After 1d4 rounds, the beings skin and possessions rise up as a greater shadowrath at the *Crown-wearer's* command. (Lesser and greater shadowraths are detailed in the *City of Splendors* boxed set. Otherwise treat them as wraiths and spectres, respectively.)

**Curse.** The *Crown* is the host for the last vestiges of the Realms' fallen god of the dead, Myrkul. The *Crown of Horns* once only manipulated its wearer and drove him or her mad through twisted visions of ancient lands that would occur randomly or when divination spells were cast upon it. It now allows Myrkul to control the wearer with *suggestions*, and it can (for 20 rounds/day) possess its wearer; a possessed wearer has an Intelligence and Wisdom of 20. Donning the *Crown of Horns* automatically changes the wearer's alignment to neutral evil. If the *Crown* is later removed, the character's original alignment returns.

Once donned, the *Crown* makes its possessor paranoid and jealous about the artifact; the bearer does anything to keep others away from the *Crown*. To a lesser extent, the *Crown* also affects those in a 100-foot radius, instilling in them a desire to possess the artifact. This often forces a conflict with the current bearer of the *Crown*, but it also ensures that the most capable and powerful people wear it.

The *Crown* slowly turns its wearer into a lich. The process takes two years of constant contact with the artifact, but the alteration is hastened by use of the major invoked powers (using the *ray of undeath* or *Myrkul's Hand* reduces the time by 1d4 months). Once the wearer of the *Crown* becomes a lich, the lich state is irreversible, and the *Crown* itself acts as the lich's phylactery

Once donned, the *Crown* cannot be removed unless Myrkul wishes to have a new host; then the *Crown* teleports elsewhere without the wearer. If the wearer has become a lich while wearing the artifact, she or he crumbles to dust instantly upon the *Crown's* departure (1% chance per level of surviving as a demilich with the character's original alignment).

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Crown must be worn by Kelemvor, God of the Dead.
- The Crown must be bathed in the lifeblood of an avatar of Garqos the Reaver.
- The *Crown* must be buried in the crumbled bones of 100 destroyed demiliches.

### Cyrinishad

The artifact known *as* the *Cyrinishad* is a large (1-foot-square) tome of raven-black leather embossed with a pattern of small grinning skulls and dark sunbursts against a twisting, warped background of torture and chaos. The book has golden hinges and clasps, and it is closed with a lock of unbreakable metal. The lock may be picked at a -15% penalty but cannot be shattered. The pages of this book are made of the flayed skins of the scribes of earlier, less-successful drafts of the tome. These interior pages are illuminated with strange, bestial designs imprinted on gold foil, and the text of the work is inscribed in bright red ink. Once begun, it is a hard book to put down. At random times and for random durations, the book may emit an eerie green radiance, which flickers and seems strongest along the edges of opening pages.

### History

The *Cyrinishad* reflects an attempt by the god Cyric to dominate the Realms and conquer the other great deific powers. As a result of the Time of Troubles, the power of a deity is directly related to the size and fervor of belief of his, her, or its followers. The *Cyrinishad* is a powerfully enchanted tome that causes the reader or listener to become a fanatical follower of Cyric. In this way, Cyric hopes to convert all the followers of other powers of the Realms to his faith, thereby destroying them and allowing him to attain the position of the *only* power in the Realms.

The *Cyrinishad* was finished after a great many drafts (397). Its power was to be tested on Fzoul Chembryl, but the god Mask was impersonating him at the time and read the book in his stead. The tome was successful in weaving its web of lies into its reader's consciousness, and Mask only escaped its complete domination by excising portions of Masks own godly power. Any lesser creature would undoubtedly be totally ensnared by the power of this book.

The *Cyrinishad* was to be read to the people of Zhentil Keep, but (the real) Fzoul instead read a blasphemous text, *The True Life of Cyric*, that rebutted Cyric's dogma. The reading was the beginning



of the destruction of Zhentil Keep. The real *Cyrinishad* was later entrusted to Rinda the Scribe, who had created it unwillingly under extreme coercion by Cyric. Rinda was rendered undetectable by the god Oghma (in a manner presumably similar to that of Alias of the Azure Bonds) and entrusted with keeping the book from the hands of Cyric and his followers.

### Campaign Use

The *Cyrinishad* is one of the most dangerous books in the Realms. If it is read, it turns its reader into a fanatical follower of Cyric, who then seeks to spread the word of Cyric throughout the Realms. As a result, it is continually hunted by agents of the church of Cyric as well as other powers who wish to either utilize its power as a bargaining chip or destroy it utterly

To make matters worse, there are a number of early drafts of the *Cyrinishad* that lack the magical powers of the final book. Most of the early drafts were destroyed (along with their scribes), but apparently one or two survived—at least in part—to make it into general circulation. This means that *Cyrinishad* sightings may occur throughout the Realms. These nonmagical drafts lack the artifact power of the true *Cyrinishad*, and they may be destroyed like any normal book.

### Powers

Constant. The reader of the *Cyrinishad* becomes a fanatical follower of Cyric. A successful saving throw vs. spell at a -4 penalty allows an individual to stop reading before the conclusion of the book. Even a successful saving throw results in the reader being under the effect of a *feeblemind* spell until a *heal* or a *wish* spell is used to cure that condition.

Those listening to the book read aloud are forced to make a saving throw vs. spell. Those who make a successful saving throw immediately suffer the effects of a *fear* spell and seek to escape the speaker. Those fail their saving throw (or those who cannot escape the reader's voice) become fanatical followers of Cyric.

Those affected by the *Cyrinishad* believe all written within the book to be true: Cyric is the one true deific power of the Realms, supreme above all other deities, and the only individual worth venerating. Priests of other deities immediately become clerics of Cyric. (Those with the necessary prerequisites may become specialty priests.) Alignment of any convert changes immediately to chaotic evil, and such an individual continues to spread the "good word" of Cyric.

Once a person is converted, only a full *wish* spell negates the effects of the *Cyrinishad*, and this only gains the individual a new saving throw vs. spell (with the *feeblemind* effects as noted above). Creatures of godly nature may shed the effects of the book, but at the effective cost of one level of their power. (A lesser power becomes a demipower, and a demipower loses all godly power.) Being affected once by the *Cyrinishad* does not provide immunization from the book—one may still be affected upon another reading.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The book must be immolated in a fire of absolute purity.
- The book must be turned over to Ao himself, who will place the book (and its godly author) into a separate plane of existence.

### Dawnstone

The *Dawnstone* is a smooth rose-crystal sphere as large as most shields. It glows with an internal light and is a thing of magic, not a real gemstone. Those who touch it find that their hands pass freely through it.

### History

Myth Drannor, though now ruined, was a shining example of what can be achieved by cooperation and harmony. To Lathanderians, it has also represented a waiting challenge, a city of beauty waiting to rise again from its ashes, following the principles of renewal taught by their faith and represented by their god, the deity of dawn, beginnings, and renewal. A century ago, Lathander appeared to certain of his clergy and commanded them to found a temple in the ruined city, giving them the *Dawnstone* to use for their altar. The faithful he appeared to became a special order, the Seekers of the Dawn. They journeyed to Myth Drannor, braving its many perils, to build a temple, the Dawnspire. Under the protection of the *Dawnstone*, the Seekers have flourished ever since, diligently cleaning and repairing areas of the city that they can safely reach and supporting themselves by their brilliant farming skills.

### Campaign Use

Only one *Dawnstone* exists. However, lesser stones exhibiting the constant powers detailed below exist in a few favored temples of the Morninglord. Adventuring bands exploring the ruins of Myth Drannor may base themselves in the Dawnspire and find themselves needing the curative powers of the Morninglord's priests and the *Dawnstone*. Some of the baatezu or the phaerimm that lurk in the ruins may mount a full-scale assault on the Dawnspire in an effort to eliminate the temple and its clergy. Player characters may be asked to defend the temple, and if its defenses fail, to spirit the *Dawnstone* away to safety.

### Powers

The *Dawnstone* can be moved only by magic, the hand of Lathander, or a priest of 12th or greater level faithful to him.

Constant. Beings touching the *Dawnstone* (even with gloves or using a pole or weapon as a probe) are affected as follows: Worshipers of Lathander are healed of all wounds and their bodies purged of any diseases, poisons, foreign objects, afflictions (including lycanthropy, feeblemindedness, insanity, deafness, and blindness), and magical or psionic compulsions, *fear*, and curses; other beings of neutral good alignment are may also be so aided at Lathander's will. Corpses of Lathander's faithful automatically make their resurrection survival roll if raised or resurrected while touching the *Dawnstone*, and priests of Lathander receive brief messages, a series of revealing images, or feelings to guide them in Lathander's service.

The *Dawnstone* has additional benefits which relate to the mythal of Myth Drannor. Within its spherical area of effect (500 yards), the *Dawnstone* prevents all wild magic from functioning and allows any magic used by those of the faith of Lathander to be of maximum power (the highest possible duration, damage, or beneficial hit point or other effect allowed by a spell or magical item discharge). In addition, the *Dawnstone* causes all dweomers, including



items disguised by magic and magical items whose powers normally conceal their dweomers, to glow with a white aura visible to all creatures.

**Invoked.** Once Per day between dawn and dusk, the *Dawnstone* can shoot forth rosy spheres of fire equal to a wizardly *meteor storm* that travel up to one mile distant at the bidding of the priest of Lathander touching it. Once per turn, the *Dawnstone* can shoot two rosy-hued rays up to 100 yards distant; each is equal in effect to a *flame strike*. These rays can be guided and bent by a priest of Lathander touching the stone to strike at desired targets (who must be visible to the summoner), but they can be also deliberately or inadvertently intercepted by other living beings. They stop as soon as they strike a living creature.

**Curse.** Anyone of evil alignment touching the *Dawnstone with* the intent of destroying it or stealing it away from its service to the faithful of Lathander is affected as if by a wizard's *energy drain* spell. Beings transformed into ju-ju zombies by this means serve Lathander, protecting the *Dawnstone* and doing the bidding of any priest of Lathander commanding them. If taken beyond the range of the stone (500 yards), such ju-ju zombies crumble into bones and dust.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Dawnstone must be transported to the ninth layer of Baator and touched by the eldest pit fiend in existence.
- The Dawnstone will be destroyed when the rays of the rising sun strike it on the day following that on which the mythal enveloping Myth Drannor is permanently destroyed.
- The Dawnstone must be bathed in Shar's dark kiss for an eternal night lasting a thousand years.

### Death Moon Orb

The *Death Moon Orb* is a gleaming sphere whose black and violet colors swim uneasily together, like oil on water, and which appears to actually absorb the light around it. When it is nearby, an aura of gloom and sadness prevails. Those who look upon it long enough can see the negative image of the moon's surface glimmering faintly on the *Orb*. For mysterious reasons, the *Orb* changes in size from time to time from a sphere that fills a large human male's hand to about the size of a large human's head.

### History

Centuries ago, the wizard Larloch, sorcerer-king of Netheril, created a powerful artifact with which he intended to control the minds of his court, reveal his enemies' plans, and summon powerful beings from the Outer planes. The artifact served him well, and he ruled for many years. Eventually, he became a powerful lich. Larloch survived the collapse of his empire and "lives" to this day in the depths of Warlock's keep. No less than 16 Red Wizards have braved the depths of the keep seeking Larloch's treasures and magic. So far, only the lich Szass Tam, Red Wizard of Thay and zulkir of Necromancy, has emerged unscathed.

At Warlock's Keep, Szass Tam sealed a mysterious bargain with the extremely powerful lich and returned with several important enchanted items, among them the *Death Moon Orb*. He used the powers of the *Orb* to free the tanar'ri lord Eltab, then to imprison him on *Thakorsil's Seat*. Before Tam could complete the ninth *rune of chaos* of the *ritual of twin burnings* and thus permanently and totally enslave the Lord of the Hidden Layer (Eltab's common epithet), a band of powerful adventurers penetrated the Citadel of Thaymount and freed Eltab from his prison. The *Death Moon Orb* disappeared in the subsequent explosion and may have teleported anywhere in the Realms.

### Campaign Use

Two adventures, *Throne of Deceit* and *The Runes of chaos*, both found in the *Spellbound* boxed set, detail Szass Tam's attempt to enslave the tanar'ri lord Eltab using the *Death Moon Orb*. The *Death Moon Orb* is likely to be lost following the conclusion of the *Runes of Chaos* adventure and may find its way into the hands of another powerful evil wizard, who might turn its powers to his or her own ends. In the hands of player characters, it is an extremely powerful and very corrupting item of power and should be used sparingly, if at all. Preventing the Zhentarim, the Cult of the Dragon, the phaerimm, or any of the other myriad evil groups found throughout Faerûn from acquiring the *Orb* should provide plenty of adventure for a group of player characters.

### Powers

**Constant.** The *Orb* functions as a *crystal ball with ESP* and *clairaudience*.

**Invoked.** The *Orb* has the following powers, which can be invoked only by its possessor: *animate dead* and *domination* (both 3/day), *charm person* (5/day), and *mass charm* (once/day). Additionally, the possessor may summon one tanar'ri, yugoloth, or baatezu and compel it to perform *one* task. Only one such creature may be summoned at any one time. If the creature summoned if of 5 HD or less, the *Orb* may not be used for summoning for another 10 days. If the creature is has from 5 to 10 HD, the *Orb* may not be used again for summoning for a month. If the creature is of 10 HD or more, the *Orb* may not be used for summoning for an entire year. Once the task assigned the summoned creature is completed, the creature returns to its plane of origin unless otherwise compelled or imprisoned.

**Curse.** The alignment of the user of the *Orb* eventually shifts to chaotic evil. The *Orb* also compels its user to greater and greater acts of evil until the user is infamous as a monster of complete wickedness and cruelty. Such individuals invariably perish in some fashion unless, like Tam and Larloch, they continue on as undead creatures and care not what others think of them.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The *Orb* must be devoured by the tarrasque or by a great feyr.
- The Orb must be transported to Arborea or another Outer Plane of good and destroyed by one of the gods who dwell there.
- The *Orb* can only be destroyed with high elven magic spells cast by the powerful high mages of the elven isle of Evermeet.



## The Dragonking's Eye

The *Dragonking's Eye* is known in many crystal spheres by a variety of names: the Eye of Doom, the Eye of Chaos, the Eye of Woe, the Eye of Sorrow, the Fiend's Eye, the Eye of Evil, the Eye of Darkness, the Eye of Night, and many similar terms. The *Dragonking's* Eye resembles a short wand of scepter with a large yellowish gem set at one end. When the device's powers are activated, the gem acquires a black, slitted, pupil-like opening, from which it derives its name.

### History

The *Dragonking's Eye* contains the essence of an incredibly ancient, evil god whose very name has been forgotten. His popular nickname, "the Dragonking," lives on in this artifact's name. It is best that the god's true name remains forgotten, for if it is ever learned and uttered, the god will be freed and his malignant influence unleashed again in the spheres of existence. As part of his punishment, all knowledge of his own name was burned from the gods memory as he was imprisoned, Thus, he is unable to free himself or to assist those who would do so. The god's avatar is reputed to be vaguely manlike, resembling a great, eight-legged dragon standing upright, with vast, dark wings.

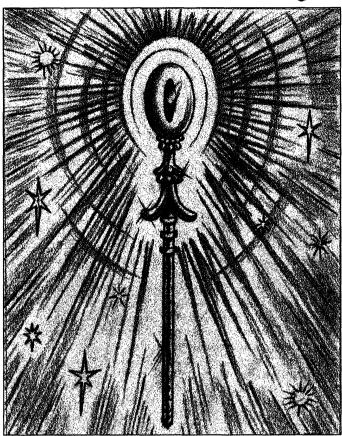
Defeated by forces of good and law, this god was nevertheless too powerful to destroy and so was imprisoned in the *Dragonking's Eye*. The *Eye* itself was put in the keeping of House Sunstaff, the leaders of the struggle against the god. The deities of law granted a boon to House Sunstaff: The family and its descendants would forever be immune to the evil of the *Dragonking's Eye* and its occupant. As centuries passed, the *Eye* was lost to the Sunstaffs, and it vanished into wildspace, there to wreak havoc and destruction upon various crystal spheres.

The Wands clan of Waterdeep, one of the city's noble families, are the last descendants of House Sunstaff, whose survivors migrated to Toril from their home world many centuries ago. The story of the *Dragonking's Eye* and its power have long since been forgotten, but chance finally returned the *Eye* to its lawful warders. After Marcus "Marco Volo" Wands and his companions defeated the Dragonking with the aid of Tyr, Sune, and Corellon Larethian, the *Dragonking's Eye* has been returned to the custody of House Wands (once-Sunstaff) to languish undisturbed in the family's crypts.

### Campaign Use

The *Dragonking's Eye* is best employed in the context of the *Marco Volo* trilogy. Prior to the events detailed in that trio of adventures, a mad wizard by the name of Sabbar found the *Eye* on a distant world, fell under its influence, and brought the artifact to Faerûn, hoping to unlock its secrets. Both Sabbar's and the *Eye's* plans were frustrated when a rogue by the name of Marcus Wands stole the artifact. Initially, the *Eye* itself did not object—though it would have preferred to control a powerful mage rather than a disreputable bard. However, it was unable to dominate or control Marcus in any way. For reasons it could not fathom, the Eye grew deeply afraid of Marcus. (The Eye was unaware that Marcus was a descendant of House Sunstaff.)

Marcus hid the *Eye* deep in the trackless depths of the Spiderhaunt Woods, a locale that fit none of the *Eye's* plans. When Marcus departed, the *Eye* began to take its surroundings under its control, making the most of the circumstances in which it found itself. It gathered monsters and followers in an ever-expanding sphere of evil



The Dragonking's Eye

around the enchanted crystal lattice in which the *Eye* cocooned itself. Sabbar, driven insane by the *Eye's* evil, became obsessed with recovering the artifact and began to actively hunt Marcus despite his attempts to implicate Volothamp Geddarm in the heist.

During the events detailed in the trilogy of modules, Marcus and a group of adventurers journey from Waterdeep to Shadowdale battling Sabbar's agents and eventually confronting the *Dragonking's Eye* and its minions in the Spiderhaunt Woods. Alternatively, the *Dragonking's Eye* could be employed following those events, somehow escaping the Wands family's custody again, perhaps as a result of later escapades of Marcus Wands. It is best if the *Eye* is "lost" for at least two years to allow it time to build up its allies before any player characters are employed to track it down.

### Powers

**Constant.** When the *Eye* is held, the owner gains 50% magic resistance and a Charisma of 18.

The *Eye* also attracts monstrous followers, its efficacy depending on how long it has been in a given crystal sphere. It attracts no monsters for the first three months. From three to six months, it acts as a *monster summoning I* spell once per week. From six months to a year, it calls up creatures as a *monster summoning I* spell once per day. From one to two years, it attracts creatures equal to *monster summoning II* once per day. From two to three years, it attracts creatures equal to *monster summoning III* once per day, and so on. This effect unfolds whether or not the *Eye* is in anyone's possession. If the



*Eye* has an owner, the monsters serve the owner—at least until the owner is completely dominated by the *Eye*. If there is no owner, the *Eye* controls the monsters.

**Invoked.** When held and invoked, the *Eye* allows its possessor to cast *domination* (3/day) and a *power word* (3/day) from a roster of *stun, blind,* or kill. Though shaped similar to a wand or rod, the Eye still uses the casting time of 3 of a miscellaneous magical item.

Once per day, a creature who touches the *Eye* while invoking this power acquires yellow eyes with black slitted pupils; this change in a creature's eyes is a sign that if it is slain in battle, it instantly rises back to life with its full number of hit points as if death had never occurred. The *Eye* can confer this protection on only one being at a time. If a protected being has not yet died, the artifact cannot be used to protect anyone else, no matter how many days have passed.

The Eye can *dispel magic* in a 120-foot-long ray emitted from its slitted eye whenever its wielder wills. The ray does not miss a single intended target, but may also affect enchantments the wielder did not intend to (or even know about) along the entire length of its straight-line, 1-foot-radius, cylindrical area of effect.

If the wielder of the *Eye* knows a proper name of any foe within 100 feet of the artifact, he can *call down a monster* on that enemy (3/day) even if the foe is invisible, disguised, or otherwise hidden. The *Eye* selects one of its monstrous followers on Toril at random and delivers the selected beast under a strong *compulsion* to slay the chosen foe to a location just behind the foe by means of a *teleport without error*. If the foe can get out of artifact range before the monster strikes it successfully, the monster is 80% likely to turn on the *Eye*-wielder in frustration, attacking fearlessly (The *Eye-wielder* is free to use all the powers of the *Eye* against it.) If the monster does not turn on the Eye-wielder, it hurries away from the area, and this power of the artifact is dormant for 2d12 days thereafter.

When properly "awakened" by invocation, the *Eye* can also be wielded like a mace in battle. It cannot be broken, bent, or cut by any known weapon, and whenever it touches a foe, its *wielder* suffers 2d4 points of damage. The foe, however, suffers more damage on a random basis not under the wielder's control: Roll 1d4; the result is how many 10-sided dice of damage the foe suffers (no saving throws are allowed to lessen or elude this life-energy-searing harm).

Whenever any invoked power of the *Eye* is called upon, there is a 6% chance (not cumulative) that the *Eye* emits five streams of 4d6 *magic missiles* each in the four cardinal compass directions and straight up. Each *magic missile* does 1d4+1 points of damage. These missiles swerve to strike the closest living being they first approach who is not the *Eye's* owner. Behind the last missile in each stream comes a spreading wave of wild magic, expanding until a permanent wild magic area has been created. This area of magical chaos typically covers up to a square mile. Wild magic areas are explained in the *Running the Realms* book of the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign Setting* box. Alternatively, DMs employing the *Tome of Magic* accessory can use two *wild surge* results from the table in that book to determine what actually occurs whenever any magic is unleashed inside the zone or enters it from outside.

**Curse.** Each month that a character owns the *Eye*, she or he must make a saving throw vs. wand. After the first month, these saving throws are at a cumulative -1 penalty (that is, a being who has possessed the *Eye* for seven months must roll at a -6 penalty). If the saving throw is a failure, the owner loses 1 point of Constitution; if it succeeds, the owner suffers no ill effect. All future rolls continue at the above progressive penalty, even after failure. Once the owner's

Constitution has been reduced to 0, she or he is a lifeless shell under the complete domination of the god imprisoned in the *Eye*. The gods alignment is chaotic evil, and it is dedicated to nothing besides wanton destruction, conquest, and bloodshed. Only a *wish* or similar spell can restore an individual lost in such a fashion.

If the Dragonking inside the scepter ever escapes, the Eye becomes inert and powerless until he is bound back within it or is destroyed, which causes the artifact to crumble irrecoverably into dust. The god Garagos is charged to destroy or imprison the Dragonking. If the nameless god ever escapes from its prison, Garagos appears with a roar amid writhing smokes and rushing winds, and the two deities grapple each other in a deadly, snarling struggle whose energies will hurl mortals helplessly away, dashing them senseless. The energies released in the battle may change nearby mortals, perhaps giving them personal spell-like powers (or awakening innate magical talents) they did not hitherto possess or increasing random ability scores. The DM should adjudicate this, allowing player characters an extra chance at attaining character abilities or spell-like powers described elsewhere in this book and a chance to escape existing conditions such as geas or feeblemind magics, lycanthropy, magics that have forced unwanted shapechanges, poisons, and diseases; players should have no say in what benefits, if any, their characters receive.

Garagos is stronger than the Dragonking and should—barely—prevail and force the Dragonking back into the *Eye* or destroy him. (If he does not, the Dragonking assumes his name and portfolio but retains its memories of mortals who wielded its *Eye* and the foes who contended against them—and seeks even the pettiest of revenges on all who have ever thwarted its plans.) A victorious Garagos will leave silently, taking the *Eye* with him if the Dragonking has been forced back into it again.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Eye is probably indestructible, but it could conceivably be removed to a place where it cannot threaten the Prime Material Plane. Such places include the Negative Material Plane or deep in such inaccessible places as Baator or the deepest roiling rifts of the nether layers of the Abyss. This does nothing to lessen the possibility that it will be found by a powerful being and used for destruction or conquest or that the Dragonking will be released, so it is probably best that the Eye remains in the Wands family's custody.
- The only certain way to destroy the Eye is to unleash the god contained within and destroy him. As this is a difficult task at best, it is not likely to happen soon.

## Gatekeepen's Crystal

The *Gatekeeper's Crystal* is an artifact shaped like a three-pointed star. It is made of onyx and an unknown metal that entwines itself through the gem. Each point of the star is a separate piece (comprising a third of the artifact). These can be combined together to create the artifact or separated to form three powerful magical items.

### History

Shortly after the fall of the Netherese survivor states, a group of pacifistic refugees from the city of Rulvadar, fleeing goblin raiders from



the south, made their way north and east to the desolate wastelands known today as the Tortured Lands. Amidst the mountains at the northern extent of the Border Forest, northwest of present-day Whitehorn, the refugees encountered the descendants of a culture dedicated to inner peace and tranquillity which existed during the time of Netheril. Together the two groups founded Ondathel, City of Peace. Dedicated to Eldath, the city prospered and cared for its hardworking citizens. After a mere century of hard work, Ondathel was pronounced a shining success, and its citizens were justifiably proud of all they had wrought. Over 200 years after the city's founding, the wizards and priests of Ondathel erected a powerful mythal and the city was renamed Myth Ondath.

Although dedicated to peaceful coexistence with its surroundings and neighbors (the city had even adopted some orphaned orc children in an attempt to raise them according to the way of Eldath), Myth Ondath had its fair share of enemies. In particular, explorers from Myth Ondath drew the ire of the Ice Queen, an incredibly powerful icepriestess lich who lived in the depths of the Great Glacier. The Ice Queen's armies attacked the city numerous times, but the defenses enspelled in the mythal were too much for her spells to penetrate.

Frustrated, the Ice Queen returned to her tower to plot her revenge. Eventually she discovered the existence of a powerful artifact from another plane that she believed held the key to overcoming the defenses of Myth Ondath. The key was held by a strange sentinel of the Outlands, known only as the Gatekeeper, who guarded a nexus of *gates* to a thousand planes and spheres. The Gatekeeper battled anyone who sought to control the free passage of beings through the nexus with a crystalline artifact that was capable of sundering the most powerful wards, mythals, and other protective incantations.

The Ice Queen stole the crystalline artifact (reputedly with divine aid of some sort) and returned with it to Faerûn. The following winter, she sent her legions against the City of Peace one last time. Led by the Ice Queen's greatest general, the lich Vrandak the Burnished, her army laid siege to Myth Ondath, creating 11 long months of unending winter. Desperate to destroy the city, the Ice Queen directed Vrandak to secretly enter the city with two parts of the Gatekeeper's Crystal. The lich employed the two pieces he carried to render the Eldathyn priests powerless, stripping them of their ability to turn undead and nullifying all necromantic magic within a 50-mile radius of the city. Vrandak and the Ice Queen then activated the Gatekeeper's Crystal, triggering an calamitous conflagration. The artifact sundered the mythal, completely obliterating the city, but Vrandak and most of the Ice Queen's army vanished in the destruction as well. Two of the artifact's three pieces disappeared, scattered across the Outer Planes, and the third was buried in the rubble of Myth Ondath. Only a scattered few survived the city's destruction, including among them the forbears of the ondonti, a race of pacifistic orcs.

The *Gatekeeper's Crystal* languished forgotten until the Year of the Lost Lance (712 DR), when some power in the far north summoned yugoloths in great numbers to itself in an assault on the rich human lands of the Dragon Reach. The three greatest of the yugoloths, the nycaloths Aulmpiter, Gaulguth, and Malimshaer, brought two of the missing pieces of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* with them. After locating the third piece, they broke free of their summoner's control with the artifact's power and organized the Army of Darkness. The nycaloths intended to sunder Myth Drannor's protective mythal and crush that fair city.

As the Army of Darkness swept south, a daring priestess of Leira infiltrated the nycaloth's headquarters and absconded with one of

the three pieces. The other two pieces of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* were again lost when the nycaloths fell to Fflar, Captain of Myth Drannor. Despite the heroics of the city's defenders, the horde swept onward and the City of Beauty fell beneath its onslaught. The mythal that enveloped Myth Drannor held, however, and it protects the ruined city until this day.

Over the next few centuries, all three pieces of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* came into the possession of the Mistmaster, a powerful archmage who dwelled in the Citadel of Mists on the northern fringes of the High Forest. In the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR), he gave two of the pieces to two Harpers who then infiltrated Hellgate Keep with the aid of the Mistmaster's illusions. The Mistmaster himself then traveled to the edge of Hellgate Keep and activated the artifact. The mythal of ancient Ascalhorn, renamed Hellgate Keep, collapsed, and most of the fiends were destroyed. The *Gatekeeper's Crystal* was again lost, and another mythal was destroyed.

### Campaign Use

The *Gatekeeper's Crystal* is lost yet again, but nearly every powerful individual and organization in the Realms is now aware of its existence. Many evil or greedy beings who seek to plunder the lost magic of Myth Drannor in Cormanthor, Myth Lharast in the heart of Amn, Myth Nantar under the waves of the Sea of Fallen Stars near the Pirate Isles, and other ancient mythals are actively hunting the *Gatekeeper's Crystal*.

At least one piece of the tripartite artifact is believed buried beneath the rubble of Hellgate Keep. The whereabouts of the other two pieces are unknown, but it is doubtful they remain together or even in the Realms. Finding the first part of the artifact is a "simple" matter of getting past the treants of Turlang and exploring the shattered Keep's fiend-ridden dungeons. Finding the other two parts of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* while keeping the first part out of the hands of countless rivals would serve as the focus of an epic quest across the Realms—and the very planes of existence—for a suitable band of heroes.

### Powers

The *Gatekeeper's Crystal* is a tremendously powerful artifact. Each of the three component pieces is a powerful magical item in its own right. Together, they create a weapon that can render nearly any being or fortification powerless for an indefinite period. All invoked powers are active as long as the bearer concentrates on the artifact and performs no other action except moving at a slow walk (half movement rate). It is possible to simultaneously invoke and maintain different powers, if available.

Constant. Any being touching any of the three pieces of the artifact is immediately made aware of the direction or directions in which the other two pieces may be found, assuming they are on the same plane of existence or in the same crystal sphere. If one or both other pieces are on another plane of existence or in another crystal sphere, the bearer is simply aware that the piece or pieces are not on the current plane of existence or in the current crystal sphere.

**Invoked.** When the three pieces of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* are merged into a tripartite star, the bearer can invoke numerous powerful effects. Every round, the bearer can create a dead magic zone or a wild magic zone with a 50-mile radius centered on the artifact. The bearer immediately becomes aware of any *gates* or other magical portals within 50 miles and can activate or deactivate any *gate* within range.



The touch of the tripartite artifact to any creature or item immediately returns it to its plane of origin. This power has no effect on creatures or items native to the plane on which the artifact is currently located.

In addition, any two pieces of the artifact can together create a powerful effect. When activated, the first and second piece together can strip priests, paladins, or rangers within 50 miles of all their granted powers and spellcasting abilities. The second and third piece can together strip any wizards or bards within 50 miles of all their magical and spell-casting abilities. The first and third piece deprive any undead within a 50 miles of their connection with the Positive Energy Plane or Negative Energy Plane, if any. All lost abilities are regained immediately once the affected being is outside of the 50-mile radius.

Separately, each piece is powerful as well. When activated, the first piece nullifies all necromantic or necromancy, alteration, and enchantment/charm magic within a 50-mile radius. The second piece nullifies all invocation/evocation, conjuration/summoning and illusion magic within a 50-mile radius. The third piece nullifies all divination, abjuration, and enchantment/charm magic within a 50-mile radius.

The artifact was primarily created to bring down wards, including mythals and other powerful protections. If the three pieces are separated and the artifact's power activated, it permanently nullifies any mythal, ward, or other protective magics partially or wholly within the triangle formed by the three pieces after triggering all of their effects. This includes, but is not limited to, all spells from the school of abjuration or the spheres of guardian, protection, or wards. This power of the *Gatekeeper's Crystal* manifests as a blazing beam of purple energy that visibly connects all three pieces. All of the magical energy held within the wards and mythals encompassed is released in an incredibly powerful explosion equivalent to a *fireball* that does 10d6 points of damage (1d6 points of structural damage) per spell level released to everything within the triangle. In addition, the explosion unleashes an earth tremor that can be felt up to 1 mile away for every 100 spell levels released.

Curse. Whenever any power of this artifact is employed by any creature other than the Gatekeeper, there is a chance that the pieces of the artifact will scatter across the planes. If a power requiring a single piece is employed, there is a 5% chance that the piece teleports randomly within the same plane of existence. If a power requiring two pieces is employed, there is a 25% chance that one piece teleports randomly within the same plane of existence and that the other piece or pieces shift to another plane of existence, selected randomly If a power requiring three pieces is employed, this probability increases to 50%. If the final power is employed to bring down a mythal, one piece always teleports randomly to some location within the area of effect and the other two pieces each shift to some other plane of existence, selected randomly

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Gatekeeper's Crystal will be destroyed if joined by the current Magister into a single piece and then sundered by Azuth, Mystra, and Savras.
- The Gatekeeper's Crystal will be destroyed if kept within a living, vibrant mythal for 1,001 years.
- The Gatekeeper's Crystal will shatter if the nexus of planes guarded by the Gatekeeper is permanently closed.

### Guardian's Tear

The *Guardian's Tear* is a powerful relic that was unintentionally created by the god Helm during the Time of Troubles. The *Guardian's Tear* resembles a rare type of gem found only in the Realms known as a *king's tear*; however, it is much larger than any known king's tear, being nearly 1 foot in length and 8 inches in diameter. It is a translucent teardrop-shaped gem with a sky-blue tint. It is smooth-surfaced and incredibly hard (unbreakable by any known means). Anyone staring into the gem sees the epic battle between Helm and Mystra from the Guardian's vantage point, replayed over and over.

### History

Following the Fall of the Gods, a small band of adventurers who would go on to achieve great renown traveled north from Arabel to ruined Castle Kilgrave. The adventurers, including Midnight, Kelemvor, Adon, and Cyric, escorted a young woman known as Caitlin to help rescue her mistress. Caitlin's mistress turned out to be the goddess Mystra, Lady of Mysteries, who had been imprisoned by the god Bane, Lord of Strife, with the aid of a magic-eating hakeashar.

With the group's aid, Mystra escaped and nearly destroyed Bane, who was rescued by a loyal priest. Mystra then mounted the Celestial Stairway outside of the castle. Helm, the Guardian, had been sentenced to guard the entrances to the heavens, one of which was the Stairway. When Mystra challenged him, Helm destroyed the goddess of magic in a calamitous explosion that devastated the region for miles in all directions. Castle Kilgrave was reduced to dust, and the Celestial Stairway dissipated into nothingness. Only a small circle of ground protected by Midnight's wall of force was spared.

Following the battle, Midnight recovered Mystra's *Pendant of Mysteries*, and the adventuring band fled the region. Unbeknownst to the company, the god Helm shed a single tear following the titanic battle. This teardrop plunged towards the ground and began to hover above a monstrous tar pit created by the magical aftereffects of the explosion. The *Guardian's Tear* embodied all of the anguish of Helm and the chaos of Mystra's demise.

Several years after the Time of Troubles, a band of adventurers known as the Knights of the Shadows were sent by King Azoun IV of Cormyr to investigate the continuing growth of the Helmlands. The company traced the problem to a gigantic gem which was hovering above a massive tar pit. It was worshiped by a tribe of gnolls as the *rock of blue fire.* The Shadow Knights managed to abscond with the gem but were then ambushed by a half-dozen dark elf wild mages calling themselves the Cult of Malyk. The cultists seized the *Guardian's Tear* and vanished.

No trace of the *Guardian's Tear* has surfaced since, but scholars among Cormyr's War Wizards theorize that another area of magical instability similar to the Helmlands may now be growing somewhere in the Underdark. It is too early to tell if the Helmlands are still expanding.

### Campaign Use

The *Guardian's Tear* is an artifact of incredible power, although that power is not easily controlled or manipulated. Its passive effects, however, can have a devastating impact on a region.

The reason the wild mages took the *Guardian's Tear* is that the Cult of Malyk is trying to overthrow the Conclave of Sshamath. Malyk is a power of wild and evil magic and rebellion (actually an



aspect of Talos) whose cult appeared in the Underdark following the Time of Troubles. Sshamath is a city of dark elves where mages rule while priestesses are reduced to minor power. It is located in the Underdark far beneath the Far Hills. The city is famed for its magical items, which it sells to merchants and adventurers from all over the Realms. The Conclave is a ruling oligarchy whose 10 members are the masters of the eight commonly recognized schools of magic, the master of the four-way factionalized School of Elemental Magic, and the master of the School of Mages.

Wild mages have been branded terrorists in Sshamath and are ruthlessly exterminated if discovered in the city. The Cult of Malyk seeks to destroy Sshamath's economy by hiding the *Guardian's Tear* somewhere within the city limits. The impact of these events on the surrounding Underdark and in the lands above is unknown, but the Zhentarim masters of Darkhold are unlikely to look kindly on such chaos beneath their cellars.

### Powers

**Constant.** The *Guardian's Tear* radiates permanent *nondetection* at all times, and all divinations regarding the *Tear* automatically fail, Anyone physically touching the *Tear* is affected as if by a *dispel magic* spell. The artifact constantly rotates clockwise, and, if left alone, levitates just above the ground. If physically touched, held, or contained, the artifact continues to spin, but it ceases levitating until released.

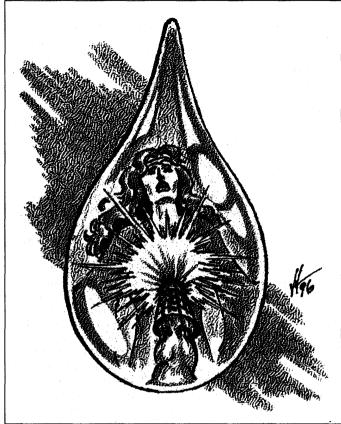
The major power of the *Tear* is caused by the raw magic contained within it. Within a 1-mile radius of the *Tear*, all magic is unstable. There is a 25% chance any magic or spells utilized within this sphere of effect fizzle, as if in a dead magic zone. There is a 75% chance any magic or spells utilized within this sphere of effect surge, as if in a wild magic area (See the *Tome of Magic* or the *Running the Realms* booklet in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign* Setting boxed set for tables of wild magic effects.) Any wild mage casting a wild magic spell within the sphere of effect automatically creates a wild surge, as discussed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Outside of this sphere of unstable magic, the *Tear* continues its chaotic effects. Every day at midnight, a "bubble" of wild or dead magic spins off from the Tear and floats up to 30 miles away (unimpeded by any physical obstructions) before coasting to a halt. Each "bubble" ranges from 1 foot to several hundred yards in diameter. One-quarter (25%) of the "bubbles" are dead magic areas and three-quarters (75%) are wild magic areas.

It is possible to move the *Tear* by physically carrying it in one's hands or in a nonmagical container, but it is impossible to magically affect the *Tear*. The sphere of unstable magic is not affected by any known magic active in the Realms today (including the *disjunction* magics developed by Mordenkainen of Oerth, which have found their ways into some Faerûnian spellbooks), but the "bubbles" of wild and dead magic can be dealt with in the same way as standard wild and dead magic regions can once they leave the zone of unstable magic.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

• The *Tear* must be crushed in the gauntlet of Helm and the fragments reabsorbed by Mystra.



The Guardian's Tear

- The Tear must be swallowed by the gigantic sphere of annihilation known as Entropy which is worshiped as a god in Luthcheq.
- The *Tear* must be enveloped by 1,001 magic elementals for 1001 years without being disturbed as it slowly fades away
- The Tear's effects can be temporarily neutralized by placing it within a nishruu, a rare creature from another plane.

## kon Helm of Heroes

The *Helm* appears as a simple bronze, bowl-shaped headpiece with little ornamentation except for Ilmater's symbol—bound human hands crossed at the wrist—etched into the helmet where it covers the forehead.

### History

The *Iron Helm of Heroes* is a minor relic of ancient construction consecrated in the name of Ilmater, god of the endurance of suffering. References to the magical *Helm* and its curative powers are scattered throughout numerous legends and tales all over the Realms. The *Helm* never seems to stay in one place for long, and, according to legend, its curative magics have contained numerous plagues and healed countless beleaguered heroes engaged in battles against the forces of evil. The *Helm's* origin is a mystery, although it is believed to be all that is left of the effects of an avatar of Ilmater who died over a millennia ago in the lands south of the Sea of Fallen Stars.



### Campaign Use

The Iron Helm is currently held by Lord Tessaril Winter of Eveningstar. As a former member of the King's Men adventuring band (where she masqueraded as Tessar the Mage), Lord Winter is sympathetic to adventurers and often uses the *Helm* to aid explorers of the nearby Haunted Halls. Player characters may discover the *Helm* almost anywhere in Faerûn when Lord Winter exhausts her quota of healing powers. Ilmater's hand usually guides the *Helm*'s appearance, however, and the discovery of the *Helm* often presages a great need for its curative powers.

### Powers

Constant. The Iron Helm of Heroes allows any good-aligned being wearing it access to powerful curative magics. When the Helm is donned, the wearer can cast spells as a 14th-level priest with major access to the healing and necromantic spheres as long as spells cast are beneficial and curative in nature. Hence the spells cure light wounds, slow poison, cure serious wounds, fortify, neutralize poison, cure critical wounds, and heal from the sphere of healing are allowed. Harmful spells such as cause light wounds, cause serious wounds, poison, and cause critical wounds are forbidden. Likewise the spells aid, cure blindness or deafness, cure disease, raise dead, breath of life, regenerate, reincarnate, restoration, and resurrection from the necromantic sphere are also allowed. Spells such as invisibility to undead, animate dead, cause blindness or deafness, cause disease, feign death, negative plane protection, slay living, breath of death, mindkiller, wither, energy drain, and destruction are also forbidden. Priests, druids, and rangers cannot cast or pray for their normal complement of spells while wearing the Iron Helm.

To obtain spells to cast, the wearer of the *Iron Helm* must pray for spells to Ilmater after 8 hours of rest and a period of meditation, just like a priest of Ilmater would. The wearer of the *Iron Helm* can pray for and cast up to six 1st, six 2nd, six 3rd, five 4th three 5th two 6th, and one 7th-level priest spell per week. No bonus spells for a high Wisdom are allowed, but a 17 or 18 Wisdom is *not* required to cast 6th and 7th level spells, respectively. If the *Iron Helm* is removed before all the prayed-for spells are cast, the spells are forgotten and must be prayed for again, even if the *Helm* is replaced on the head. Note that all available spells need not be prayed for and that lost spells do not count towards the total number of spell levels used, as discussed below.

After 100 (or more) spell levels of priest spells are cast using the *Helm,* the relic randomly teleports to another part of the Realms where it can be found by a good-hearted person willing and able to cure needy heroes. (Lord Winter is unaware of this property. To date she has cast 48 spell levels of priest spells using the *Iron Helm of Heroes.*)

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The avatar of Talos must drink unholy water consecrated in his name from the Iron Helm of Heroes.
- Loviatar must deliver 1,000 lashes to an Ilmatari wearing the Helm.
- The Helm must be worn by a wizard or priest as they undergo the transformation into lichdom.
- The Helm must be immersed in the blood of a Faerûnian ruler slain in a battle that has claimed at least 10,000 lives.

## Living Gem

The *Living Gem* appears as a glowing, faceted ruby as large as a human's head either levitating in place or flying about.

### History

The *Living Gem* appeared in the Realms some 8,000 years ago during an invasion of the lands that would later become known as Calimshan by an army of creatures and minions from the Elemental Plane of Fire. The Army of Flame destroyed the thousand-year-old empire of the Djen, a humanoid race from the Elemental Plane of Air, with substantial assistance from the *Living Gem*.

The *Living Gem* apparently remained in the region following that great conflagration because an item fitting its description and reputed powers is mentioned in several ancient tales of the nomadic humans of the region dating from that era. It is known from ancient tomes found in the ruins of Shoonarch, the capital of Monrativi Teshy Mir that the *Living Gem* was employed by the humans of the region as they slowly settled down and began to build the Shoon Empire.

Shoon VII, the last, great ruler of the Shoon Empire, apparently discovered the *Living Gem* in the years prior to his nation's downfall, but it is unknown whether the *Gem* was a factor in the empire's collapse. Shoon is believed to have survived the destruction of his empire first as a lich and later as a demilich.

A long-lost grimoire of Shoon known as the *Tome of the Unicorn* was stolen in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR) from the Green Rooms, the great library of the palace of the ruling house of Rauthym, where it had been secretly stored for centuries. The *Tome* is believed to contain an extradimensional space containing Shoon's undead remains, and the *Tome* may as the lich's phylactery. Subsequent events suggest that the *Tome* was stolen by agents of the adventurer-wizard Shond Tharovin of Calimshan. It is believed that Shond struck an unholy bargain with the demilich in exchange for information about the *Living Gem's* location. The current location of the *Tome of the Unicorn* is unknown.

Early in the Year of the Shield (1367 DR), after exploring ancient ruins in the heart of the Forest of Mir, Shond announced the discovery of the *Living Gem* floating in midair in a shattered underground temple. He quickly set about seizing power in the city of Schamedar, Calimshan. After killing most of the ruling council and driving the others into exile, Shond declared himself vizier.

The wizard set about building a temple, the House of the Gem, and creating a cult of worshipers led by rainbow-robed priests. He claimed to worship the *Gem* and declared it was his wisest and most trusted advisor, and proclaimed that it and he had grand plans for the future might of Calimshan. When the countryside east of Schamedar rose up in rebellion under the leadership of folk calling themselves the Seven Satraps, Shond sent dark horrors conjured with his spells against the villages and towns along the River of Ice.

Shond's bid for power was abruptly halted by the archmage Yoond Shalshymmyr, who died in a deliberate sacrifice of his life while laying a mighty curse on the usurper. The curse transformed Shond into an amorphous, screaming thing of many mouths and flowing form— like the horrid monsters known to humankind as gibbering mouthers. The citizens of Scharnedar then drove the monster into the sewers.

The Cult of the Gem endured for nearly a year, its "priests" raining destruction down on the citizens of Scharnedar through the power of



the *Living Gem* and its hired mercenaries battling the armies of the Seven Satraps. Eventually the rule of the Cult of the Gem was overthrown after a protracted siege, and the Seven Satraps were recognized by the pasha of Calimshan as the rightful rulers of Schamedar. The *Living Gem* disappeared with the handful of surviving "priests" and has not been seen since.

### Campaign Use

The *Living Gem* is a seductively powerful artifact with the power to unleash great devastation over long distances. The surviving priests of the Cult of the Gem could have fled to anywhere in the Realms. Little more than a band of opportunistic thugs, they are likely to fall under the sway of another charismatic and powerful force of evil who seeks to twist the *Living Gem* to its own ends. Both Shond Tharovin and the demilich Shoon probably seek to reclaim the *Gem*, and many other powerful sorcerers may join the hunt as well.

Tracking down and attempting to destroy or banish the *Living Gem* before it can inflict further destruction in the Realms will involve a series of quests by player characters that may conclude on another plane. Such a quest is likely to generate a host of powerful and nearly immortal enemies for the characters who will seek vengeance for countless years to follow, regardless of the characters' success in completing their quest.

Certain dwarven houses have sought the *Living Gem* for generations. The quest for it has become a quasi-religious obsession among them. Anyone bearing this artifact should beware watchful dwarves.

### Powers

Constant. The *Living Gem* can only be possessed by a living mortal (not an undead being) daring enough to grasp it firmly with two hands and try to control it. The mortal must immediately make a successful system shock survival roll, a Constitution ability check, and a saving throw vs. death magic at a-3 penalty (with no bonuses due to magic) or die, permanently and irreversibly, with his or her body and spirit absorbed into the *Gem*. Success results in the mortal becoming the current owner of the *Living Gem*. Beings who touch the *Gem* without attempting to control it automatically suffers this mortal fate if they do not succeed at a saving throw vs. death magic at a -3 penalty. (Those who succeed drop their grasp on the *Gem* and feel a strong urge not to touch it again.)

The current primary owner can allow other beings to become "co-owners" if they survive the same ritual. Only one being (whether primary owner or co-owner) can utilize the *Gem's* powers in any given round. If more than one current co-owner attempts to use the *Gem's* power in a given round, the *Gem* responds to one set of commands chosen randomly. The *Living Gem* always responds to the primary owner's commands.

A mortal can attempt to Seize control of the *Living Gem* even if the current primary owner is still alive by the same process outlined above except with a -7 penalty to his or her saving throw (assuming the being can touch the *Gem* before its current owner moves it out of reach). Failure has the fatal results outlined above. Success visits those same effects on the previous owner—with no saving throw allowed. Ownership or co-ownership of the *Living Gem* cannot be given up except by passing beyond the mortal state (such as by dying or becoming a lich) or by losing it to another claimant with effects described above.

**Invoked.** The *Living Gem* has numerous powers that can only be invoked by the mental command of the current primary owner of the *Gem* or a co-owner. Each power takes one round to invoke and requires complete concentration during that round. These powers work regardless of the distance separating the owner or co-owner and the *Gem*. The owner can also prevent *all* co-owners, but not specific co-owners, from employing the *Gem* at will. (This last power does not require continuous concentration.)

The *Living Gem levitates* in place unless mentally commanded to fly (as the *fly* spell).

At will, the owner of the *Living Gem* can scry anywhere in the Realms as with a *crystal ball* with no risk of insanity or loss of Intelligence. The scene to be scried can be made to appear within the *Living Gem* or on the surface of an illusionary mirror created through the magic of the *Gem* within 100 feet of the owner of any size up to 30 feet by 30 feet.

The Living Gem can be made to teleport without error to the location depicted by the mirror or within the Gem. The Gem can also teleport without error back to the immediate vicinity of the owner at the owner's mental command.

If the owner or a co-owner is a wizard, she or he can cast spells from the school of invocation/evocation directly into the *Living Gem*. These spells can then be unleashed at any time by any owner or co-owner of the *Gem* with effects as originally cast, but originating at the *Gem*, not the spellcaster.

Curse. The *Living Gem* has absorbed the spirits of countless hapless mortals on numerous worlds since its creation; it slowly consumes these to feed its magic. Although it is not truly sentient, the absorbed spirits give the *Gem* a nascent sense of self. This proto-intelligence deludes each owner or co-owner into viewing the *Gem* as a living thing, when all it really embodies is a corrupted, power-hungry reflection of the owner's desires. As a result, all owners are driven totally mad in anywhere from a few days to a few years. (No saving throw allowed. The DM chooses the form or forms of madness as appropriate.)

The *Gem* has one additional power that is more of a curse than a boon. It absorbs any harmful spell cast at the current primary owner, even if the *Gem* and the primary owner are hundreds of miles apart, except for a magical curse, effectively rendering the primary owner immune to ranged spells. However, any magical curse cast on the owner automatically succeeds, but its effects are partially mitigated so that the owner survives (although possibly in some horribly twisted form). (Yoond's curse had the effect of turning Shond into an immortal monstrosity so the former human wizard immediately lost ownership of the *Gem.*)

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The *Living Gem* must be touched by the scepter of the caliph of the Djen who lives on the Elemental Plane of Air in a palace in the eye of an eternal hurricane.
- Every life force contained in the Living Gem must be stolen and consumed by the demilich Shoon.
- The Living Gem must be shown its own reflection and then immersed in the sacred waters of Evergold, the bathing pool of Sune and Hanali Celanil.



# Ring of Winter

The *Ring of Winter* appears as a simple band of gold sparkling with frost along the edges. When first held it burns the flesh with intense cold and vibrates with power. Unless the *Ring* is in contact with living flesh, it slowly covers whatever it touches with frost, out to a 5-foot radius. It emits a fierce blue radiance when in the presence of magic working against it.

### History

All that is known for certain about the *Ring of Winter* has been gleaned from ancient histories. It was forged by a mage of staggering power (some say Azuth before he became a god) and kissed by Auril at a time when the countries that now make up the Realms were little more than scattered villages. Regardless of its origin, the *Ring of Winter* has always been object of fascination and desire for those who seek to do great good or great evil in Faerûn.

Lord Dhalmass Rayburton of Cormyr found the *Ring* in the vicinity of present-day Shadowdale over a millennium ago. He used the *Ring* for several years in the Forest Kingdom before hastily departing for the jungles of Chult, from whence he never returned. Countless adventurers searched for the *Ring* over the intervening centuries before it was rediscovered. Notable among them in recent times were Gareth of Waterdeep, Kelemvor Lyonsbane, Cyric of Zhentil Keep, and Princess Alusair Nacacia.

In the Year of the Wyvern (1363 DR), Artus Cimber found the *Ring* in the temple of Ubtao in the city of Mezro in the jungles of Chult. He used it to help defeat an army of goblins led by the Cult of Frost who were attacking Mezro in order to capture the *Ring*. Artus later returned to Cormyr with his new lady love, Alisanda Rayburton, daughter of Lord Rayburton and bara of Ubtao, and the pair have been quietly adventuring in the Heartlands ever since.

### Campaign Use

The *Ring of Winter* is a powerful artifact of legend, and news of its rediscovery spread like wildfire throughout Faerûn. It is far too powerful to give to player characters, but they may cross paths with Artus Cimber during their adventures. Every power-hungry wizard or sinister organization in the Realms is likely to send their agents after the *Ring*, and Artus may need help fending off their attacks.

### Powers

To command the *Ring*, a being must wear it. The *Ring of Winter* has an initiative modifier (casting time) of 4.

**Constant.** The *Ring* augments the powers of all other magical items that remain within 20 feet of it for more than 10 days as adjudicated by the DM. The longer the exposure, the more the powers increase.

While wearing the *Ring*, the bearer does not age, effectively conferring immortality if the *Ring* is never taken off.

**Invoked.** The *Ring* can alter the climate in large areas, plunging temperatures below freezing and creating large amounts of ice and snow. It can emit a triple-sized *wall of ice* in a round, raise a pillar

of ice 10 feet across that rises 40 feet upward per round, or spray paralyzing frost on all beings within a 60-foot-radius sphere in a round. (Flight is impossible for frost-sprayed beings, and all movement in the radius of effect is cut to a third of normal rate.)

The *Ring* can also bring an ice sphere into being around an item or creature. This sphere transfers protective warmth to the interior while emitting intense cold from its exterior with effects equal to a *cone of cold* on all beings within 10 feet of the outer surface. The sphere is AC 4 and can withstand 56 points of damage in one place before shattering. It suffers double damage from all heat and flame-related attacks.

The *Ring* can also create ice spikes 10 feet tall, *heal* its wielder, fashion animated, creature like constructs of ice (including flying ice "birds" large enough to carry man-sized beings aloft in their claws), and emit large and powerful arms of ice that can grip or strike with the same power as a *Bigby's crushing hand*.

The *Ring* can freeze even enchanted beings to brittle solidity if it can envelop them in ice. One blow shatters and slays such a trapped creature, but the process of envelopment takes 1d3+1 rounds, and if any magic strikes the ice during this time, it falls away and the process must begin again.

The *Ring* can shatter metal with its cold or create ice armor in precise areas and amounts, fashioning manacles, shields balanced to a particular user, or collars. The wielder can create a rapier, dagger, or other piercing weapon of ice (equal to the normal weapon, save that all damage is increased by 1d4 points due to chilling cold) or conjure icy gusts of wind that can pick up and hurl man-sized or smaller beings around. With some practice, the Ring-wearer can fashion slippery ice sheets to aid in moving stone blocks or create ice pillars, braces, and even stairs.

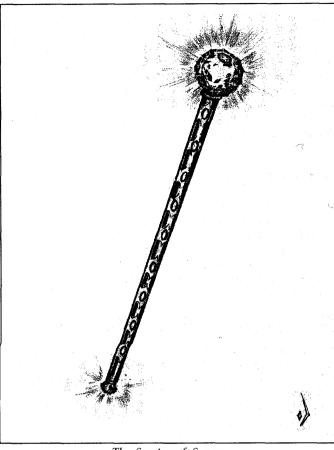
**Curse.** The "curse of the *Ring*" is a myth long associated with the *Ring of Winter*. Those who quest for the *Ring* are often visited by disaster in some form or other, although this is more a function of their hearts than any magic of the *Ring*.

When worn, the *Ring* gives its bearer visions of its effects, tempting its wearer with scenes of unbridled power. (A favorite image is the bearer clad in translucent ice armor, which is presented as an invincible defense.) However, the *Ring* serves only the powers of good—if used for evil ends, it twists its wielder's intent to bring down disaster. For example, when Lord Rayburton tried to use the *Ring* to frighten a rival Cormyrean nobleman into allowing him to perform an archeological dig on the noble's property, the *Ring* buried the entire village and the nobleman's estate in ice, killing everyone for miles around.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Ring of Winter must be melted down in the heart of the sun of Realmspace.
- The Ring must be baked in the heart of Kossuth, chilled in the depths of Istishia, crushed beneath the fist of Grumbar, and its shattered remnants scattered by the winds of Akadi.
- The Ring must be used to encase the entire planet of Abeir-Toril (seas and all) in an ice age, at which point it shatters, its power exhausted.





The Scepter of Savras

## Scepter of Sauras

The *Scepter of Savras* is a 4-foot-long staff of carved, smoky gray duskwood inlaid with nine star sapphires along the shaft. A 1-inch-diameter diamond engraved with the symbol of Savras the All-Seeing caps the base of the scepter, and a 3-inch-diameter diamond (reputed to have 1,000 facets) that is engraved with the symbol of Azuth tops the staff.

### History

After the fall of Netheril and before the founding of Myth Drannor, the gods of the Realms battled in the Dawn Cataclysm, foreshadowing the destruction that would occur as a result of the Fall of the Gods in the Year of Shadows. Gods were slain in battles that shook the Realms, new deities were created, and Tyche was sundered into Tymora and Beshaba. During this time of turmoil, two gods elevated by Mystra at different times to aid her by overseeing the portfolio of wizards battled for supremacy. Azuth defeated Savras the All-Seeing and imprisoned his essence within a powerful artifact he had constructed prior to the conflict.

The Lord of Spells, as Azuth was thereafter known, intended to keep the scepter in which Savras was imprisoned as his staff of office. Although reduced to demipower status as a result of the conflict, Savras was still powerful enough to *teleport* his prison into the Realms where it passed beyond Azuth's reach. (As the All-Seeing One and Lord of Divination Magics, Savras could just barely block

even Azuth's divination abilities.) The *Scepter of Savras*, as the artifact came to be known, passed through the hands of countless archmages over the centuries. Savras was always seeking to break free of his prison, and he subliminally (as the Spirit of the *Scepter*) influenced many a wizard to assist him in reaching his goal.

Before Savras could break free, however, the *Scepter* came into the hands of Syluné Silverhand, one of the Seven Sisters. Savras permanently granted her the abilities of a weredragon, enabling her to take the shape of a mature adult silver dragon at will. The All-Seeing One hoped to convince Syluné to free him from his ancient prison, believing that she had the power to do so as one of Mystra's Chosen.

Syluné turned a deaf ear to Savras's entreaties, as she did not trust the fallen god, and instead used her formidable powers and the *Scepter* during numerous adventures. Eventually she willingly surrendered the *Scepter* to Azuth upon his request. (Word of the artifact's location finally reached the Lord of Mages by roundabout ways in time for him to recover it.) Syluné had used the *Scepter* to uncover some secrets of the doings of the powers (gods) of the Realms that Mystra deemed it better for mortals not to know.

Once Azuth finally reacquired the *Scepter of Savras*, he found himself troubled by the long imprisonment the All-Seeing One had endured at his hand. Following the Time of Troubles, the Patron of Wizards agreed to Savras's request to be released in exchange for a pledge of fealty by Savras to the High One.

Today Savras is a demipower who serves Azuth, albeit uneasily, and whose portfolio encompasses all divinations and divination magic. The two deities seem to be cautiously working toward friendship and a formal division of portfolios. Some sages speculate that the All-Seeing One is attempting to widen his portfolio to include the idiosyncrasies of fate since he can see the future as well as the past. These inclinations will likely come to naught, since Tymora and Beshaba would definitely find such a move not to their liking.

The *Scepter of Savras* abruptly vanished during the god's release from his imprisonment. Like the *Cyrinishad*, the *Scepter* is apparently invisible to all godly purview. Rumors of its appearance in scattered locations throughout Faerûn are increasing, however, suggesting the *Scepter* is still in the Realms—and still contains much of the power used to create it.

### Campaign Use

The *Scepter of Savras* is a powerful artifact with awesome potential in the wrong hands or in the right situation. Currently the *Scepter* exhibits divination powers in addition to its imprisonment powers, but the former would probably change if it were used to capture a god with a different portfolio. Savras is eager to obtain the artifact, as he believes that some of his divine power is still captured within the staff

Player characters might stumble across the *Scepter* as it flits across the Realms and be unaware of its significance. If long-time foes or opportunistic strangers were to recognize it first, they would stop at nothing to acquire the *Scepter*. Assuming they succeeded in seizing the *Scepter*, the characters might be involved in a desperate race to warn a patron or favored deity of the impending attack. Failure could result in a serious disruption in the Balance and perhaps even the loss of a priest's patron deity!



### Powers

**Constant.** The *Scepter of Savras* strikes as a *quarterstaff* +5. It has the power to *imprison* any creature struck that fails a saving throw vs. spell (as the wizard spell, but with the large diamond as the destination instead of the center of the planet). Striking the base of the *Scepter* to the ground and speaking the imprisoned being's true and complete name three times in rapid succession is the only way to free it from its prison,

If the avatar of a god is struck by the *Scepter* and fails its saving throw, the deity's entire essence in Realmspace is drawn into the *Scepter* in addition to its avatar. If the deity has a presence on other worlds and planes (outside of the Realmspace crystal sphere), that divine presence is entirely cut off from Realmspace until this part of the deity's essence is freed from the *Scepter*. No priest of that deity can receive spells until their patron is freed unless they are physically touching the *Scepter*. Given the dependence of the gods on the number and fervor of their worshipers after the Time of Troubles, this could quickly lead to an imprisoned gods death through starvation. Regardless of whether a god was captured by a mortal, an imprisoned deity can only be freed if the ritual described above is performed by the avatar of another god or by a being who contains a spark of deific power (such as one of Mystra's Chosen or a Banelich).

The wild magic of the Time of Troubles and the residues of Savras's release seem to have imbued the *Scepter* with the ability to *teleport* randomly. There is a 1% cumulative chance per day that the *Scepter* teleports to another random location in the Realms. Since the *Scepter* is effectively untraceable by magic, this property suggests that anyone wishing to exploit its powers must do so quickly

Lesser beings (in other words, nondivine creatures) trapped within the staff's large diamond are aware but helpless, unable to communicate but also unaging, until they released. There is a 3% noncumulative chance per day that any such prisoner is driven insane by the confinement (modified as the DM sees fit by any extenuating circumstances or aspects of a being's personality).

**Invoked.** The *Scepter of savras* exhibits a wide range of powers imbued by the most recent or current deific being to have been imprisoned in it. These powers can be invoked upon the utterance of the deity's name and the power desired. Should another deity come to occupy the *Scepter* after Savras, the invoked powers of the staff would slowly shift to reflect that deity's sphere of influence. The scepter has an initiative modifier (casting time) of 2.

Since Savras was the most recent deific tenant of the *Scepter*, the artifact exhibits a wide range of divination abilities. The bearer of the *Scepter* can cast any priest or wizard spell from the school or sphere of divination merely by requesting the spell by name. The bearer can also cast any such spell that obscures divination spells (such as *misdirection* and the like) at will in a similar fashion.

The large diamond on the tip of the Scepter acts as a powerful *crystal ball*. Any spellcaster of 9th level or greater who stares into the sphere can spy on any location in the Realms or in the Inner and Outer Planes in areas inhabited by the Faerûnian pantheon provided it is not shielded from scrying by deific powers. There is no risk or penalty for extended viewing. If the bearer so chooses, she or he can also read the mind of any being, mortal or divine, pictured in the sphere—though complete understanding of the thoughts of divine beings is not necessarily conveyed.

**Curse.** Use of an artifact of such power as the *Scepter of Savras* does not come without serious risks. Any deity trapped within the

prison is still fully self-aware and in possession of any of the magical or psionic abilities of its avatar that do not require a physical form to employ. Said deity will strive its utmost to secure its release and will promise and/or give nearly anything in its power in exchange for being released. However, there is a 1% cumulative chance per day that the bearer of the *Scepter* is driven insane by the proximity of the deific power unless she or he is of the same alignment as the imprisoned deity, devoutly worships the deity, or contains a spark of divine essence herself or himself (such as Syluné did).

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Scepter of Savras must be used to imprison the avatar of Azuth, at which point it shatters, freeing the deity.
- The Scepter of savras must be used to imprison a hakeashar, nishruu, or magedoom.
- The Scepter of Savras can be snapped like a twig by the avatar of Mystra should she so choose.

## Starym Moonblade

This dark-hued blade has a straight edge and is engraved on each side in silver filigree with identical sets of five elvish runes. Written in ancient Espruar, the runes can be translated in order ascending from the hilt, as "amoral," "flee," "treasure seeker," "spirit stealer," and "banshee." A spiderweb of cracks appears to spread throughout the blade, but they have no effect on the blade's performance or durability. The steel handguard is smooth and unmarked, and the simple handle is wrapped in the hide of a black dragon. A black moonstone with a bluish sheen, an extremely rare variant of the more common moonstone worth well over 5,000 gold pieces and engraved with the sigil of the Starym clan (three stars set in an equilateral triangle around am open maw) is set securely in the pommel. Regardless of what material its scabbard is made of, the blade turns this sheath black over time.

### History

The long sword originally known as the *Starym moonblade*, also known as *Bladeshee* and *Darkmoon*, was forged and enchanted by mages and smiths of Myth Drannor centuries before the Time of Troubles. *Moonblades* were conceived by the Council of Myth Drannor as a test of character of noble moon elf family lineages. The swords were to be inherited from one blood relative to another and would violently reject, and possibly kill, any potential bearers who were found unworthy. If the last bearer of a line was found unworthy, the *moonblade* would become dormant. Worthy inheritors of a *moonblade* could add one magical power during their tenure as sword wielder derived from their needs or nature. The noble moon elf family that retained the most *moonblades* for the longest period of time eventually would become the royal house of Evermeet after a selection process lasting many centuries.

Early in the history of the city later to be known as Myth Drannor (long before the *moonblades* where forged), the elf ruler Eltargrim invited humans, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes to join in fellowship with the elves and help build what would become the City of Beauty. Not all the elves agreed with their ruler, however,



and one prominent noble family, the Starym elf family, left Myth Drannor and moved west to the Thunder Peaks and beyond, where they largely faded into history. Long after their departure, a minor moon elven branch of the Starym family returned to Myth Drannor and lived there until the city's destruction. This return was viewed with suspicion by many of Myth Drannor's citizens, as many suspected the family of sedition and treason against the city.

When the moonblades were first forged, the Starym nobles of Myth Drannor demanded a blade for their family as well. Since no wrongdoing by the family had ever been proven, the city's leaders had no choice but to accede to their request. The sword that would later be known as Darkmoon was forged and presented to the family's patriarch, Illitran Starym. Most expected the blade to reject its first wielder and immediately fall dormant, but this did not occur. Whispers suggested the family had employed fell sorcery to warp the moonblade's magic, but, again, nothing was ever proven. With the aid of Moander, god of corruption, Illitran secretly employed special magics to eliminate the character-test powers of the moonblade, causing them to become inactive in the instant after drawing the blade but before the sword could judge his character. The Starym moonblade's magic was altered to deliver a powerful electrical jolt to any wielder not of pure elven lineage, but to accept any pure-blooded elf wielder regardless of character. The surrounding mythal of Myth Drannor imbued the sword with a trace of Illitran's spirit and a nascent sentience to fill the moral void created by Illitran's magic.

The second bearer of the *Starym moonblade* was the patriarchs first son, Venali Starym. He wielded it adequately, although without great distinction, for many years. During the assault by the Army of Darkness, Venali hid in the family crypts, concerned more with protecting his personal fortune than with the city's fate. When the crypt was discovered by a group of fiends during the battle, the *moonblade* wielder imbued the sword with the ability to *teleport* itself and its wielder out of dangerous situations. The magic of the mythal warped the power he imbued in the sword and instilled in the blade a strong streak of self-preservation and cowardice along with a small piece of Venali's spirit. Although Venali did manage to teleport to relative safety outside of the mythal, the mythal's prohibition on teleport magics was warped into preventing the *Starym moonblade* from ever again entering or moving about Myth Drannor except by physical means.

Venali fled to other Starym family holdings hidden deep within the Hullack Forest. There he died of a strange wasting disease, and the *moonblade* was passed on to his young elf niece, an elf battle wizard known as Seldanna the Cold. Seldanna helped rebuild the Starym family fortunes for many decades by sponsoring a long series of raids on surrounding human and dwarven cities, particularly those in the ever-encroaching kingdom of Cormyr. Her magics augmented the *moonblade's* sentience even further, instilling in it an overwhelming sense of greed and the ability to infallibly locate priceless gems and precious metals.

Seldanna and much of the Starym clan were eventually tracked down and slain in punishment for their crimes by a half-elf ranger descended from the Llundlar noble house of Myth Drannor, and the *moonblade* passed to Seldanna's only surviving son, known to sages today only as the Scourge. The Scourge and a small band of fanatical elf followers fled to the Stonelands where the renegade Starym noble helped found the Eldreth Veluuthara (*Victorious Blade of the People* in an ancient elven tongue). This secretive fellowship of elves is still active today and has been responsible for the deaths of many humans and elven half-breeds (half-elves) over the years. The



The Starym Moonblade

Scourge instilled in the *moonblade* a strong hatred of nonelves, and a special purpose of destroying all humans and elf half-breeds.

Unbeknownst to the Scourge, the *moonblade* also altered itself so that it chose the additional power granted to the sword every generation it was wielded by a member of the Starym clan. It gave itself the power to steal a fraction of its wielder's sentience and spirit to augment its own, beginning with the Scourge, and became truly sentient in its own right. The Scourge was eventually poisoned by his only child and daughter, known today only as Black Lotus, who desired the *moonblade's* magic for herself. Soon after, Black Lotus fled the Eldreth, who began to suspect her of causing her father's death.

The elf maid warred intermittently for control with the corrupt intelligence inhabiting her magical blade over the next few decades. Black Lotus eventually lost her sanity entirely before finally regaining control over the *moonblade*, thus completing her family's descent into madness and depravity. She was responsible for numerous atrocities throughout the Inner Sea lands for many years before she sought to return to Myth Drannor and seize her "rightful inheritance." Black Lotus carried the *moonblade* into the ruined city and plundered a great deal of magic and treasure before being crushed to death in a long-abandoned crypt beneath the city. Normally she would have arisen as a groaning spirit, but the mythal, combined with the magic of the *moonblade*, warped the process. Black Lotus's spirit was completely absorbed into the *moonblade*, and the weapon acquired the ability to project a *mythal ghost* in her image that could wail like a banshee.

Once the *moonblade* had completely absorbed Black Lotus's essence, it *teleported* itself out of Myth Drannor, seeking a new wielder. Legends pieced together by bards and sages have begun to spread about the weapon, known as *Darkmoon* by some and *Bladeshee* by others, although little is known of its actual powers except for the information given above.



### Campaign Use

The *Starym moonblade* seeks a pure-blooded elf descendant of the Starym clan as wielder to further augment its powers. If the Harpers or the forces of Cormyr hear rumors of its quest, they will seek to track down the sword before it succeeds. Any additional powers would make the blade a well-nigh invincible foe. Suggested new powers for *Darkmoon* to seek include *human influence* (as the ring), *fly* (as the 3rd-level wizard spell), *spell turning* (as the ring), and *life-stealing* (as the sword).

After randomly teleporting to safety in an abandoned ruin located in western Faerûn, *Darkmoon* could deliberately begin a campaign to destroy the surrounding lands and their inhabitants with its wail. The sword would be hoping to attract a powerful elf warrior tracking down the supposed banshee in the area and then dominate him or her.

Some sages whisper the sword plots to take over the throne of Evermeet. Whether or not this is true, the weapon is a shameful legacy in the history of the elves. If a campaign is based in Evermeet, Queen Amlaruil of Evermeet could dispatch an elite team of adventurers to hunt down *Darkmoon* and destroy it. Alternatively, her agents may employ a band of adventurers from the mainland to hunt down the weapon.

Darkmoon could return to the Eldreth and assume leadership of the fellowship by dominating the current leader, a descendant of the Scourge. It would then plan a wave of assassinations to eliminate prominent humans and half-elves, including many Harpers, throughout Faerûn. Harper agents who caught wind of this plan would report it, and a band of Harpers would likely be sent out to destroy the moonblade before its plans come to fruition. Darkmoon's first assassination campaign would then likely be targeted at the half-elf descendants of the long-forgotten Llundlar house, which might includes a player character, unbeknownst to the character. An adventuring party would then have to fight off the sword's minions, uncover the reason for the vendetta, and either destroy the Starym moonblade or redirect its attentions elsewhere.

### Powers

Constant. Darkmoon is a magical long sword +3, +5 vs. humans and half-elves with many unique powers, as is characteristic of all elven moonblades, but also enhanced by the influence of Moander. This corrupted moonblade is sentient and of chaotic evil alignment. It has an Intelligence of 17, an Ego of 22, a personality score of 39, and speaks archaic elvish. It is corrupt, rather cowardly with a strong streak of self-preservation, greedy, xenophobic (with respect to nonelves), power hungry, and vengeful. The sword attempts to dominate anyone wielding it and is insufferably arrogant at all times. It particularly delights in killing humans and half-elves and prefers to employ its banshee wail against such victims. Its edge is incredibly keen and can slice through bone, metal, and stone.

**Invoked.** Currently the blade has four extraordinary powers in addition to the suspension of a *moonblade's* normal ethical strictures, none of which work unless the sword so chooses.

The blade can *teleport without error* (as the 7th-level wizard spell) itself and, if it chooses, its current wielder, whenever the blade or its bearer is in danger. The destination is a random location within a 100-mile radius of the point of departure. It cannot teleport into or within the mythal of Myth Drannor, although it can successfully teleport out of the ruined city.

*Darkmoon* can detect the direction and distance of gems and precious metals within a 100-yard radius of itself at will and will communicate this to its bearer as it chooses through speech.

Every time *Darkmoon* is inherited by a direct descendant of the elven Starym clan, it can grant itself a new magical power. (Unlike most *moonblades*, the bearer does not get to choose the additional power.) Each time it bonds with a new descendant of the Starym family, the sword steals a small portion of its bearer's spirit and gains one additional point of Ego; the sword wielder loses 1 point each of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma permanently.

Finally, Darkmoon can at will project a mythal ghost in the image of Black Lotus-a beautiful, young, moon elf female warrior garbed in ornate elven chain mail-that is an extension of its essence. Like any mythal ghost created in Myth Drannor, it has the same abilities and statistics as its creator (in this case a combination of the moonblade itself and Black Lotus-a 7th-level fighter proficient in the long sword with single weapon and bladesong fighting style specializations, AC 2, and STR 15, Dex 17, CON 14, INT 17, WIS 9, CHR 18). A mythal ghost can move or wield items (including the moonblade), but it cannot speak or cast spells. A mythal ghost is unaffected by fire, cold, and any undead attacks and has hit points equal to its creator (57 hp). It can fly upward or downward at 20 feet/round, is always protected by a feather fall spell, and can move with utter silence if desired. A mythal ghost is susceptible to magic but cannot be affected psionically. If the mythal ghost is destroyed, the moonblade can reform the mythal ghost in 1d6 days. In addition, this mythal ghost can utter a wail of the banshee (as the 9th-level wizard spell in the Tome of Magic, cast as an 18th-level mage) once per day, that affects up to 18 creatures (chosen randomly) within 30 feet of the mythal ghost. Only creatures touching the moonblade's hilt are immune to this wailing.

Curse. The *Starym moonblade* can only be wielded safely by true elves of the Starym clan. Other elves may touch the blade or may be subjected to attack (by the blade's abilities or as below) at the blade's whim. Anyone else, regardless of alignment, that attempts to wield or carry the blade is struck by a lightning bolt that does 8d6 points of damage. Identical attacks occur every round until the blade is no longer physically held. Once bonded with the *moonblade*, a Starym elf cannot be separated from the blade for more than 24 hours, or immediate death results. Non-Starym elves and members of other races can never truly bond with the blade.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The *Starym moonblade* must be bathed in the tears of Queen Amlaruil of Evermeet.
- The *Starym moonblade* must be shattered by the touch of Eldath.
- The Starym moonblade will shatter when the mythal encompassing ruined Myth Drannor is destroyed.

## Thakonsil's Seat

Thakorsil's Seat is one of the numerous enchanted items brought back by Szass Tam from his visit to Warlock's Keep (Larloch's Keep). It is a massive stone throne with an elaborately keyhole-carved back, arms in the form of snarling dragons, and feet in the form of claws grasping spheres. Once the first of the nine runes of chaos are



created using the *ritual of twin burnings*, a great, nine-sided crystalline pyramid appears around the throne, imprisoning its occupant. The occupant cannot leave by any means so long as at least one rune is in existence, although an outside agency can destroy the runes and set the prisoner free.

### History

When the baatezu lord Orlex ruled the ancient kingdom of Yhalvia (which may have been on another world altogether), a band of renegade wizards, led by the archmage Thakorsil, created this item to imprison and enslave the creature. Unfortunately for then, the device required extensive acts of evil magic (the sacrifice of good-aligned individuals, for example) in order to function. After imprisoning Orlex and enslaving him with the *runes of chaos*, the council of wizards created a regime every bit as cruel and evil as Yhalvia's former ruler, and they were themselves displaced. Orlex was banished back to the planes, while *Thakorsil's seat* was lost and presumed destroyed.

The *Seat* finally came to rest in the hoard of the sorcerer-king Larloch, who never actually used it. In his fateful meeting with Szass Tam, the Red Wizard lich, Larloch decided that the *Seat* might serve the Zulkir of Necromancy well, Tam returned to Thay and freed Eltab (a tanar'ri lord formerly imprisoned beneath Eltabbar in Thay) and then compelled him to take the *Seat* with the *Death Moon Orb* and reimprisoning him by creating the first *rune of chaos*, Tam managed to complete eight of the nine runes before a band of powerful adventurers disrupted his plans and freed Eltab. The seat was buried in the subsequent destruction of the chamber in which it was held.

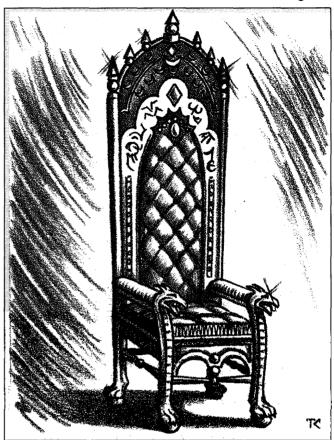
### Campaign Use

Two adventures, *Throne of Deceit* and *The Runes of Chaos*, both found in the *Spellbound* boxed set, detail Szass Tam's attempt to enslave the tanar'ri lord Eltab using *Thakorsil's Seat. Thakorsil's Seat* is likely to be buried in the depths of the Citadel of Thaymount following the conclusion of the *Runes of Chaos* adventure unless sent to a new location. If Tam can recover the *Seat*, he will still have an extremely potent tool at his disposal, even without the *Death Moon Orb*. The alternative is hardly better; *Thakorsil's Seat* is a truly terrible item that should never be allowed to fall into the wrong hands.

In the hands of player characters, it is an extremely powerful and very corrupting item of power and should be used sparingly, if at all. The *Seat* may well find its way into the hands of another evil power such as the Zhentarim, and the horror of the *ritual of the twin burnings* and the enslavement of powerful beings will begin once more. As this could lead to a continent-wide conflagration that might rival the Tuigan invasions or the Time of Troubles, DMs should think very carefully about letting the *Seat* loose in their campaigns (although there are similar, but powerless, "false *Seats*," created by wizards attempting to create their own artifacts of enslavement, and characters could well find one of these).

### Powers

Thakorsil's Seat was created as an instrument for enslavement. Originally created with good intent to imprison evil beings, it has ended up with the exact opposite effect, allowing the permanent enslavement of beings of virtually infinite power and the corruption which accompanies this.



Thakorsil's Seat

Fortunately the *Seat* has a number of limitations which make it difficult to use. First, the being to be enslaved must be compelled to sit on the throne. If the creature is held involuntarily or tricked into sitting, it receives a single saving throw vs. spell when the *ritual of twin burnings* begins; it is magically bound to the throne and unable to move only if the roll is a failure. Creatures magically compelled to sit (such as those controlled by the *Death Moon Orb*) receive no saving throw. Victims with natural magic resistance are also allowed to roll to avoid the effects of the *ritual*.

Once a creature is bound by the creation of the first *rune of chaos*, it must remain in the *Seat*, but it receives a saving throw each time the *ritual of twin burnings* is performed and another rune created. Each of these subsequent saving throws is at a cumulative penalty of -1 (-4 for the fifth rune, for example). When the ninth *rune* is created, the creature's spirit is permanently bound to the *Seat*. It may physically leave the *Seat*, but it is completely enslaved to the *Seat's* owner. No further saving throws are allowed; the enslaved creature can only be freed by the use of multiple *wishes*, the intervention of the gods, the destruction of the *Seat* itself, or some other extreme circumstance.

The throne's other drawback is that the *ritual of twin burnings* is long and involved, and it requires the sacrifice of successively more powerful victims, as described below.

Prior to the creation of the last *rune of chaos*, the other *runes* are vulnerable to destruction or removal. Any damage or disfigurement destroys a *rune*, and destroyed *runes* must be replaced using the *ritual of twin burnings*. If all the *runes* are destroyed prior to the cre-



ation of the last one, the throne's occupant is freed. After all nine *runes* have been created, they can only be removed with the destruction of the chair, although the creature sitting in the chair can pass through the crystalline pyramid as if it were not there to do the bidding of the throne's owner.

While the *Seat* is active, it has an additional, inadvertent effect that may work to its owner's advantage. The *Seat* sends out magical "interference" that prevents the use of divination spells (*clairvoyance*, *ESP*, *detect evil*, etc.) within 200 miles. Magical items which duplicate such effects, such as *crystal balls*, *amulets of ESP*, and so on are also rendered useless.

Ritual of Twin Burnings (Wiz 9; Evocation)

Range: Within sight of Thakorsil's Seat

Components: V, S, M Duration: Special

Casting Time: 24 hours per rune

Area of Effect: Special Saving Throw: None

This complicated and deeply evil wizard spell is a ritual binding used to permanently bind a creature to *Thakorsil's Seat*. If used in conjunction with any other artifact, or not in the presence of the *Seat*, it has no effect.

Each time this ritual is used, a *rune of chaos* is created, a mystical symbol that progressively binds a creature to the *Seat*. In order to permanently bind an individual to the *Seat*, nine *runes* must be inscribed, one on each side of the nine-sided crystalline pyramid that surrounds the *Seat* itself. The victim must be imprisoned upon the seat by the use of other magic while the *runes* are crafted. Once the *ninth rune* is created, the victim may physically leave the *Seat* but is permanently and totally enslaved to the wizard who created the *runes of chaos*.

There are three prerequisites to a *ritual of twin burnings*. First, the ritual may only be performed once per month, during the full moon. Second, each *rune* requires the sacrifice of a good-aligned human mage of increasing level (at least equal to that of the number of the *rune* to be created). Observers have reported that existing runes on the Seat emit eerie chords of deep, musical sound during such a sacrifice. Victims of the sacrifice are completely destroyed, and their very essence is consumed to create the *rune* (hence the twin burnings of the name—body and spirit) The first *rune* requires the sacrifice of a 1st-level mage, the second one of 2nd-level, and so on. The third condition of the ritual is that this sacrifice must be performed near the *Seat* and requires a full night and day to complete. If the caster of the ritual is disturbed at any time, the spell is broken and the process cannot be performed again until the next month.

The material component of this spell is the good-aligned human mage of the requisite level.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- Thakorsil's Seat can be permanently destroyed only by the blow of a weapon wielded by a greater goddess or god.
- The Seat must be transported to the Abyss and plunged into the forge of the balor prince Vrr'maal.
- A circle of 100 mages of at least 10th-level must continuously cast destructive spells at the *Seat* for 100 days.

## Tear of Selûne

The *Tear of Selûne* appears to be a scintillating, rough-surfaced crystal approximately the size of an ogre's fist. Unlike most meteorites, it is actually a massive diamond that radiates intense magical power.

### History

Long ago, the gods of the Realms were swept up in the Dawn Cataclysm, an event which foreshadowed the Time of Troubles in its destructive effect on the Realms. During this time of turmoil, the goddess of luck, Tyche, split into two lesser fragments—Tymora and Beshaba—with the two lesser goddesses representing good and bad luck, respectively. Selûne wept at the death of her close friend and ally and shed a single crystalline tear. This meteorite, known as the *Tear of Selûne*, fell to the earth and was found by the priestesses of the Lady of Silver in the cold lands known now as Thar.

A single crystalline shard of the *Tear* was placed in the tip of a beautifully carved oaken staff that would be known as the *staff of the Shard*. The *staff's* crystal gleams with blue sparkles and reputedly draws its powers from the *Tear*.

Guided by the *Staff,* the Selûnites carried the teardrop relic north through the mountains and into the even colder lands of Vaasa, where they placed it in a shrine. Two steel keys resembling short rods were forged from the iron fragments that fell from the sky along with the *Tear.* These magical keys were needed to unlock the shrine and retrieve the *Tear,* a precaution taken to guard the relic from interlopers. One key was sent to a temple in the south, but it was lost to bandits on the way. The other key, known as the northern key, was kept by the priestesses who maintained a vigil over the shrine of *Selûne's Tear.* 

A tribe of ogres from Thar observed the meteorite's fall and the actions of the Selûnites, and eventually tracked them to the shrine of the *Tear*. During the subsequent deadly raid, they happened to capture the northern key before being driven off, and it languished for centuries in their cave (which was later occupied by a behir).

As the years passed, the *staff of the Shard* was carried by different chosen priestesses of Selûne until several centuries ago, when it was lost in the Marsh of Chelimber. The *staff* was later recovered by Fuorn, the treant-king of the Forgotten Forest, who held onto it at the request of the moon goddess. Tales tell of the *staffs* power to locate lost people, objects, and places, to *create light*, to *heal*, and to deal explosive damage upon striking a foe in combat.

The tale of the *Tear* resumes nearly 200 years ago when the southern key ended up in the hands of a wizard named Crossar, leader of a minor faction of Red Wizards in Thay. Using the southern key and drawing on the power of the *Tear of Selûne*, his faction became very important in the politics of that nation—virtually overnight. Although he was a skilled mage, his talents were not enough to account for his cult's sudden rise to prominence. Rumor claimed he was aided by an object fallen from the sky, but his use of the *Tear* was never proven.

To protect his secret, Crossar furtively constructed a small tower in the swamp between Thay and Aglarond. Shortly thereafter, Crossar's power suddenly waned, and his political faction fragmented. The mage fled Thay, presumably to his stronghold in the swamp; and the tower became known as Crossar's Tomb since the wizard was never seen again.

Only the Simbul has deduced that the *Tear* was responsible for these strange events. Crommer was overwhelmed by the magic of the *Tear*, and, like Tyche, split into two halves. Today the good frac-



tion of his essence survives as a watchghost, eternally imprisoning his evil half, which survives as an extraordinarily powerful crimson death. Until recently, the southern key remained buried beneath that eternal battlefield.

Following the Time of Troubles, an adventuring band which called itself the Seekers was sent by the Lady of Silver on a quest across the Realms. The band recovered first the *staff of the Shard* and then the southern key from Crossar's tomb with the aid of the Simbul. The Seekers tracked the last key to the ogre's cave and slew the behir in whose hoard it had lain for so many years. The final leg of their quest led them to the shrine of the *Tear*. The intrepid adventurers had the relic in their grasp when the goddess's favor apparently abandoned them, and they, the *Tear*, and the two keys were captured by the Zhentarim.

The fate of the *Tear of Selûne* is unknown save that it was apparently lost during the subsequent destruction of Zhentil Keep. Some theologians speculate that Selûne manipulated events to ensure that the *Tear* was present as Cyric's insanity wreaked havoc on that cursed city, but if that was the case, her motivation is unknown. All traces of the brave Seekers have vanished save for the journal of one member of the band that washed up in the nets of a fisherman from Elmwood a short time ago.

### Campaign Use

The *Tear of Selûne* is lost once again; the two keys and the *staff of the Shard* may well be scattered to the four corners of Faerûn. Anyone who gains possession of the relic and the keys has the opportunity to unleash tremendous amount of destruction or to do great good.

Keeping a step ahead of the forces of evil and recovering the *Tear* would be a quest worthy of true heroes. Finding any surviving Seekers using the clues in the lost journal is a good starting point for such a quest, as is recovering the *staff* which can lead the questers to the *Tear*.

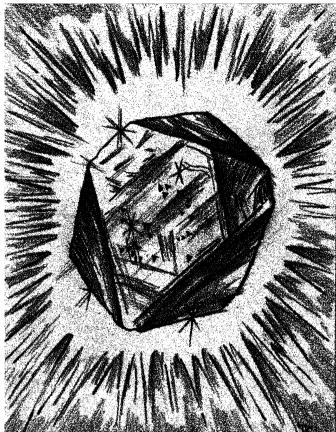
The hand of the Lady of Silver guides all who quest for the *Tear* in her name. Discovering the fate of the Seekers and recovering any survivors would be looked upon very favorably by the clergy of Selûne and by the Lady of Silver herself.

### Powers

**Constant.** The *Tear of Selûne* has a powerful impact on all magic cast in its vicinity. All spells cast within 100 feet of the *Tear* operate at maximum effectiveness (duration, range, healing, damage, etc.) and as if cast by a spellcaster three levels higher than the actual level of the magic-wielders in the sphere of effect.

**Invoked.** The two steel rod keys can draw on the magic of the *Tear* to unleash the mighty destructive power of the heavens. Each key enables a bearer to unleash a *meteor swarm* (as if cast by an 18th-level wizard) at will that rains down from the heavens to strike anywhere in the Realms that the bearer of the *Tear* can see (including through a scrying device).

Possession of just one key requires a complicated litany of prayers to Selûne by a powerful (9th level or greater) spellcaster to invoke this fiery hail of destruction and risks activation of the curse (although the goddess has been known to send a *swarm* down through a key unbidden to protect a faithful priest) Possession of both keys (which fuse to form a single steel rod twice as long when



The Tear of Selûne

touched together) allows the bearer to invoke countless deadly *meteor swarms* without penalty.

**Curse.** Some of the cosmic energy released when Tyche broke into Tymora and Beshaba was absorbed by the *Tear* as it fell from the heavens. Anyone employing a single key to invoke the *Tear's* destructive potential runs a 5% cumulative chance per use of splitting into two undead creatures—one of pure good and one of pure evil. Both creatures have the memories of the original being and are convinced that they *are* that being, and both are doomed to an almost eternal struggle until one of them is destroyed. Possession of the joined key apparently allows the bearer to avoid this curse.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Tear of Selûne can be destroyed by the avatar of Shar whenever Mystra's presence is blocked from the Realms or Mystra is dead (as has happened for brief periods several times in Faerûn's history). If this ever happens, both Selûne and the new Mystra will be significantly weakened in power.
- The Tear of Selûne will return to the heavens when Tyche reforms from the merging of Tymora and Beshaba.
- The *Tear of Selûne*, the keys, and the *staff of the Shard* will shatter into worthless fragments if the rejoined key is ever used to unleash the fury of the heavens in the name of true evil.





Windwalker Amulet

## Windwalker Amulet

The *Windwalker* amulet appears to be a 3-inch-long golden dagger in a rune-carved sheath hung from a thin chain of gold. The runes are written in the ancient language of the Rus, and the metal is worn and darkened with age. The hilt actually twists off to reveal not a dagger, but a tiny chisel. The base of the sheath is hollow.

### History

In centuries long past, a restless people known as the Rus swept over much of Faerûn, raiding and pillaging the coastal lands. Some bands of Rus took to the rivers and made their way inland, first raiding and then settling. Before the great Anauroch Desert was formed, a river flowed through the then-forested lands to the Moonsea. One small group of Rus traveled through a chain of lakes and rivers as far as Rashemen and settled there. Their descendants—and echoes of their culture and their magic—can still be found in the land of Rashemen.

The *Windwalker* amulet was created by the Rus to assist in the casting of ancient form of magic known as *rune lore* and was borne by the group that eventually settled in Rashemen. The *Windwalker* was handed down for generations, eventually coming into the hands of the Witches of Rashemen. The Witches adapted the artifact's enchantment to store the power of another ancient form of magic that had evolved from *rune lore* known as *place magic*.

The *Windwalker* was used by generations of Witches before its powers were gradually forgotten and it became a dusty relic lost to time. The amulet was lost in modern times during a raid led by a group of Thay's Red Wizards. News of this theft came to the attention of the other Witches just as they were considering another dilemma:

what to do with a young warrior named Fyodor and his unpredictable berserker rages. One of the Witches saw a possible connection between the two problems. She recalled a legend about the Windwalker: it was said to store magic and transfer it permanently to the bearer. The exact method and rituals involved had been lost through time; even so, this suggested a way to deal with the young champion. If place magic could be stored in the amulet, might not the berserker magic be stored and controlled with it as well? And so the Witches gave Fyodor the task of recovering the amulet. Fyodor found the Windwalker, but immediately lost it to a drow wizard of Menzoberranzan. The berserker then tracked the amulet to the Underdark of the North before losing its trail again.

The secret of the *Windwalker*, oddly enough, was pieced together by a young drow wizard, Liriel Baenre, who crossed paths with Fyodor and discovered the amulet first. She became interested in the ancient form of magic known as rune lore and its connection to place magic, a type of sorcery also employed by the drow. Quite by accident, she recognized the Windwalker as a tool for such magic. Liriel used the *Windwalker* to temporarily store her own form of place magic—the strange radiation magic of the Underdark. With the help of the Windwalker, she took her innate drow powers to the surface, and then, after allying with Fyodor, sought to make them a permanent part of her magical arsenal. The dark elf and the Rashemaar berserker fulfilled both their quests on the isle of Ruathym after a long and dangerous rune quest.

### Campaign Use

A ancient artifact of the Rus similar to the *Windwalker* can come into play if stumbled across by player characters. Researching its powers, let alone successfully completing a rune quest, should require numerous adventures and far-reaching expeditions spanning most of the length of a campaign.

The Windwalker itself is unlikely to leave the hands of Liriel and her companion, Fyodor, even after they complete their rune quest (and hence no longer need the amulet) unless they choose to allow others with whom they take a fancy the opportunity to engage in a rune quest of their own. If the dark elf and the berserker cross paths with player characters, the unlikely pair might use the Windwalker's magic to aid an adventurer in some short-term quest by using the amulet to store a token of the adventurer's unique place magic. Fyodor is charged with returning the amulet to Rashemen and must eventually give the Windwalker to the Witches, so he will not permanently relinquish it to any group of characters.

### Powers

The Rus employed a form of magic known as rune lore to aid them in their battles and in daily life during their wanderings. Ancient runes are more than mere symbols memorized from a scroll or spellbook. Life is the necessary conduit for such knowledge. There are three steps to the casting of rune magic: shaping the rune, carving it on an appropriate medium, and casting it.

Runes can be learned in three different ways: They can be taught by a rune master, gained by insight through struggle and experience, or given as gifts of the gods. Since few rune masters remain in the Realms and the gods only very rarely grant runes to mortals, learning a rune through struggle and experience is the only likely route open to an aspiring runecaster. A "rune quest" is a long and hazardous journey



that shapes the rune in the runecaster's mind. (The *dajemma*, or journey of self-discovery, that is required for all young male Rashemaar—optional for young women—is derived from the ancient rune quests of the Rus.) The rituals of carving and casting a rune, a process independent of actually learning the rune, can be taught by a shaman schooled in the ancient traditions of the Rus. Such shamans might be found in isolated locales in the Realms once settled by the Rus.

The magic of Rashemen's Witches, cultural descendants of the Rus, is different from the magic known in the western Realms. They must learn spells, as do other wizards, but they also tap into other forms of power. One of these is *place magic*. Witches venerate sites of natural power and revere the spirits who dwell there. Many of their spells are drawn from these sites. The Witches adapted ancient artifacts of the Rus to store the power of place magic. Some of these artifacts were designed to help runecasters carry the source of their power on their many journeys; others used the journey itself to help form the desired magic. One of these rare magical items became known as the *Windwalker* amulet, for it could function in both ways: to temporarily store the power of place magic and to aid in the casting of unique and powerful rune spells.

Constant. The Witches discovered that putting a bit of water or soil from a sacred site into the sheath's hollow allowed them to temporarily carry the power of that place with them. On the rare occasions when a Witch had to leave her homeland, she would use the Windwalker amulet to carry the source of her magic with her. Liriel employed this power to carry her place magic beyond her homeland by placing a sliver of stone imbued with the magical radiation found only in the Underdark in the sheath. Likewise Fyodor could have carried the place magic of Rashemen in the sheath by placing a few drops of jhuild (firewine) in the sheath.

By placing a token amount of some object taken from a place of power (such as a few drops of water from a sacred well or spring) in the *Windwalker's* sheath, a spellcaster can carry the place magic of his or her homeland with himself or herself. This magic lasts approximately 60 days before dissipating and only benefits a person who is physically present when the essence of a place of power in their homeland's is put within the sheath. If the *Windwalker* is emptied for any reason, the place magic is lost until the ritual is repeated. (Merely putting the token back in the sheath is not sufficient.) The *Windwalker* can only hold one type of place magic at a time.

It is not necessary to physically carry the *Windwalker* to receive this power; merely remaining in the immediate vicinity (approximately a 30-foot radius) is enough for the amulet's user to receive its benefits. If the *Windwalker* is lost for any reason (even if it remains within the 30-foot radius, as adjudicated by the DM), the benefits it grants are immediately lost. It is then necessary to physically touch the amulet to reacquire the *Windwalker's* stored place magic.

**Invoked.** The *Windwalker* was created by the Rus to assist in the casting of the most potent of runes. The artifact's power is attuned to Yggdrasil's Child, an ancient oak tree on the island of Ruathym, which is a symbol of the ancient, mythological tree that supports all of life. With the *Windwalker*, a seeker can carve a unique and powerful rune on Yggdrasil's Child.

Liriel traveled from the Underdark to Ruathym, accompanied by Fyodor, to cast such a rune spell. This journey constituted her "rune quest." The rituals of carving and casting were taught to her by a Ruathymaar shaman, and the *Windwalker* allowed her to cast a truly powerful rune that made both her and Fyodor's respective place magics permanent.

A rune carved on Yggdrasil's Child with the *Windwalker* creates a permanent magical effect on the runecaster (similar to the 8th-level wizard spell *permanency*, but unaffected by *dispel magic*, *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spells, or similar magics and not requiring the caster to lose a point of Constitution). The rune's effect can range in power from that of a *limited wish* to that of a full *wish* (similar to the wizard spells of the same names, but without any corresponding penalty often associated with such spells), depending upon the insight gained and the change and growth in the runecaster during his or her rune quest, as determined by the DM.

**Curse.** Not every rune quest ends in success, and the risks are commensurate with the power of the magic sought. There is a price to be paid for all magic; runecasting requires much of the caster. The journey is often long, the risks great, and the needed insights painfully won. At times the casting goes awry, especially if the caster is not clear on what it is that she or he truly seeks or if an attempt is made to cast the rune before it is completely formed.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Windwalker will crumble to dust upon the death of Yggdrasil's Child (or its parent tree—an event which will occur at the end of time).
- The Windwalker will lose its power upon the death of the last living rune master in the Realms.
- The Windwalker can be crushed in the jaws of Dendar the Night Serpent (known to the Rus as Nidhogg, the serpent who gnaws on the roots of Yggdrasil).

## Wyvern Crown of Cormyr

The *Wyvern Crown of Cormyr* is fashioned from pure star metal hewn from the heart of an asteroid which crashed into the Wyvernwater long ago. The Crown is studded with numerous jewels, including beljurils, black sapphires, emeralds, and rubies. Set in the center of the Crown is a flawless diamond the size of a human male's fist. When struck by a bright light, the Crown scintillates and sends forth reflective rays in all directions from its gem-tipped spikes. The base value of the gems alone is over 100,000 gp. The Crown itself is priceless.

### History

The royal family of Cormyr consolidated the fledgling Forest Kingdom an age ago from numerous other realms including Esparin in the northwest, ruled by the Warrior-Queen Enchara, and an eastern region ruled by the Witch-Lords of the Wyvernwater. The Witch-Lords' regalia included a magical crown known as the Wyvern Crown, which was seized by the ancestors of King Azoun IV.

The *Wyvern* Crown is rumored to be inlaid with numerous *ioun* stones. Other legends relate that it also possesses some of the powers of a *helm of brilliance*. The leader of the Witch-Lords, known as the Witch-Duke, was believed to be immortal until he was slain in single combat by the King of Cormyr. Some speculate that the





Wyvern Crown of Cormyr

wearer of the *Wyvern Crown*, which the Witch-Duke bore, was empowered with *vampiric regeneration* abilities. All the bard's tales agree that the Witch-Lords were able to summon and control a host of wyverns on which they rode into battle against the Forest Kingdom, causing great destruction.

### Campaign Use

Unbeknownst to the royal family, while King Azoun IV was away leading the Alliance in a crusade against the Tuigan, agents of the Zhentarim, led by the famed thief known as Nith, broke into the royal strongcrypts and stole several items of great power including the Crown. Nith's band was to rendezvous with Ashemmi of Darkhold at a secret location in the Stonelands. Unfortunately for the Black Network, Nith's band wandered through a wild magic region in the Helmlands as they proceeded north. The powerful magic of the stolen goods interacted oddly with the region, resulting in the items randomly teleporting throughout the Heartlands to unknown locations. Wild rumors have claimed sightings of the legendary circlet in many fabled ruins including Myth Drannor, the Haunted Halls north of Eveningstar, and the lost Elfhold in the depths of the Hullack Forest. Regardless of the regalia's location, King Azoun IV would surely reward greatly anyone or any group returning the Wyvern Crown to the royal family in Suzail.

Given its long connection with the Wyvernwater, the *Crown* is likely to return to that region. The Witch-Lords' castle, sub-

merged in the depths of that freshwater lake and rising to the surface only when certain thick mists occur, is currently inhabited by Wyvernvapor, an old male mist dragon. If the dragon discovers the *Crown*, the consequences for eastern Cormyr could be devastating.

### Powers

Constant. Whoever wears the Crown gains a +3 Armor Class bonus. Mounted on the tips of the Crown spikes are 10 functioning ioun stones that grant their benefits to whomever wears the Crown. The ioun stones include the following: a pale blue rhomboid (+1 STR, max. 18), a deep red sphere (+1 DEX, max. 18), a pink rhomboid (+1 CON, max. 18), a scarlet-and-blue sphere (+1 INT, max. 18), an incandescent blue sphere (+1 WIS, max. 18), a pink-and-green sphere (+1 CHA, max. 18), a clear spindle (sustains person without food/water), an iridescent spindle (sustains person without air), a blood red ellipsoid (vampiric regeneration, as per the ring), and a deep purple sphere (works as a +4 periapt of proof against poison). (All save the last two ioun stones should be identifiable by a sage with particular knowledge of ioun stones.) The ioun stones and other gems worked into the Crown cannot be removed without destroying them except by the use of a wish spell for each and every stone.

**Invoked.** Once per month the *Crown* can emit a *prismatic spray* (as the 7th-level wizard spell) that emerges from the center diamond. Set directly beneath the diamond is a rogue stone, the target of several *gemjump* spells in the centuries since the *Crown* was created. Each reigning Witch-Duke in turn who possessed the *Crown* cast a *gemjump* spell upon the rogue stone in case the *Crown* was ever stolen. It is unknown which, if any, other mages have cast a *gemjump* spell on the rogue stone or if any of the former Witch-Dukes survive, perhaps in some undead state. Given the Crown's peculiar curse, described below, this is not unlikely.

The *Wyvern Crown* gives its wearer the ability to telepathically command any wyvern within 100 yards at will. All wyverns willingly serve the wearer of the Crown and are even willing to lay down their lives for the *Crown-wearer* if so commanded.

Curse. Any being who possesses the *Wyvern Crown* is subject to its insidious curse. The *Crown* naturally inspires jealousy in all who see it, and anyone who comes into physical contact with the *Wyvern Crown* for the first time must make a successful saving throw vs. spell at a -4 penalty or become completely obsessed with possessing the regalia. An obsessed individual will do anything to obtain the *Wyvern Crown*, and once she or he possesses it, such a person will not part with it short of death. Only a *remove curse* followed by a *bless* spell permanently mitigates the obsession.

Anyone wearing the *Wyvern Crown* for more than a few days becomes increasingly egotistical, tyrannical, chaotic, and evil. Anyone wearing the *Wyvern Crown* (even irregularly) for more than a month becomes increasingly paranoid, always seeing enemies and traitors all around. After a year of exposure, the Crown-wearer becomes obsessed with living forever, so as to never be apart from the regalia, and will most likely consider resorting to lichdom. These effects on the Crown-wearer's personality slowly fade at the same rate as they first occurred only if the *Wyvern Crown* is lost and the obsession magically cured, as described above. However, renewed physical contact with the *Crown* begins the cycle of obsession again.



# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Wyvern Crown must be buried at the bottom of the Wyvernwater and the lake filled in with earth.
- The Wyvern Crown will crumble into worthless dust when every surviving Witch-Lord is destroyed. (At least four such liches and two demiliches still exist.)
- The reigning monarch of Cormyr must wear the Wyvern Crown continuously for one full year without succumbing to its curse.

## Yuthla the Eye of the Beholder

Yuthla the Eye of the Beholder, is an adamantine torc inlaid with a large fragment of polished amber. In the center of the amber can seen a miniature, petrified "inner eye" of a beholder that appears to beat in shifting light.

### History

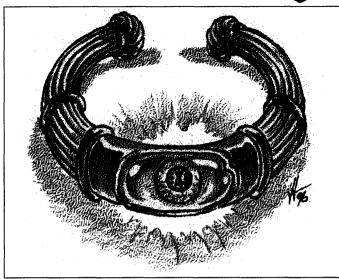
In the dim history of the Underdark, the drow city of Menzoberranzan was founded by refugees from the war-torn city of Golothaer led by Menzoberra, the high priestess of Lolth. Following their defeat of the dwarves of the Black Axe Clan, the drow refugees discovered a massive underground cavern called Araurilcaurak ("Great Pillar Cavern"). At the command of their dark goddess, the drow settled the cavern and drove out all the previous inhabitants, including a monstrous beholder known as Many Eyes.

The beast, also known as Yuthla, was a massive beholder rumored to be over 30 feet in diameter with over 100 eyestalks. Drow scholars later theorized that the monster reached its abnormal size due to the high concentrations of Underdark radiation in that region. The scholars believe Many Eyes was a variety of elder orb, given its spellcasting ability and ability to direct scores of undead beholders (also known as death tyrants). After a final climactic battle in which hundreds of drow and their slaves were slain, Yuthla was destroyed.

Drow legends relate that immediately following Yuthla's death, Menzoberra plunged her fist within its carapace and withdrew its still-pulsing "inner eye" which served as the beast's brain and heart. In an unholy rite of devotion to Lolth, Menzoberra petrified the organ and encased it in a magical variant of amber. The resulting gemlike stone was magically reduced and mounted on a adamantine torc which Menzoberra wore around her neck until her death.

Menzoberra is believed to have used the artifact, referred to in the old stories as *Yuthla the Eye of the Beholder*, to aid in the construction of the new city and to clear monsters from the surrounding wilds of the Underdark. Following Menzoberra's death, the inlaid torc disappeared in the subsequent power struggle between her daughters. Although numerous drow matriarchs have searched for the artifact in the intervening centuries, no trace of the Eye has ever been found.

One rumor of interest relates a tale over eight decades old; a company of adventurers based in Zhentil Keep stormed an abandoned dwarfhold deep in the Border Forest rumored to contain a long-lost dragon hoard. After battling an entire clutch of green dragons, the decimated adventuring band returned to Zhentil Keep with many



Yuthla the Eye of the Beholder

treasures. On a recently discovered parchment listing the loot they recovered is a reference to a magical torc with an amber eye. Subsequent events indicate that this is likely a reference to *Yuthla*.

Descendants of the explorers became merchants and nobles of the city of Zhentil Keep, and the magical torc apparently lay hidden and forgotten in some noble's mansion. The only recent reference to Yuthla came to light in 1357 DR, the Year of the Prince, when it was lost by a drunken Zhent noble while gambling. A noted dancer and entertainer, Tamrithara Taless, known locally as the Gray Veil, disappeared soon after with her new-won treasure. The following day Zhent authorities apparently uncovered legends about the noble's "trinket" and its reputed power when they investigated the noble's complaint that he was robbed, but their frantic searches never turned up any trace of the artifact. The dancer, now thought to have been a drow priestess in disguise, has disappeared completely

### Campaign Use

The rulers of the Dales, Cormyr and Sembia are also believed to be extremely concerned about the rediscovery of the lost artifact. Anyone possessing *Yuthla the Eye of the Beholder* could destabilize large portions of the Realms. The Zhentarim are also desperate to acquire this artifact, which rested beneath their noses for so long, particularly in the wake of their recent setbacks. If player characters were to discover the fate of the artifact or the Gray Veil, many powerful individuals, organizations, and nations would expend great effort to acquire the information.

### Powers

**Invoked.** The wielder of the *Eye of the Beholder* can cast the following spells as an 18th-level mage at will: *levitate* (as the 2nd-level wizard spell) and *control death tyrant* (as the 4h-level wizard spell). The wielder can cast the following spells as an 18th-level mage once per day: *create death tyrant* (as the 8th-level wizard spell), and *tyranteyes* (as the 9th-level wizard spell).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Control death tyrant, create death tyrant, and a description of death tyrants can be found in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set. Death tyrants (undead beholders) are also detailed in the Monstrous Manual accessory. Tyranteyes is found in The Seven Sisters accessory or treated as a specialized shapechange into the form of a beholder with all the corresponding magical powers.



Once per day per effect, the wielder can duplicate the effect of each eye of a beholder. These abilities include: *charm person, charm monster, sleep, telekinesis* (250-pound weight limit), *flesh to stone* ray (30-yard range), *disintegrate* ray (20-yard range), fear (as a wand), *slow, cause serious wounds* (50-yard range), *death ray* (40-yard range), and *anti-magic ray* (140-yard range, 90° arc). The effects originate from the torc, which must be worn to function.

**Curse.** The *Eye* naturally inspires jealousy in all who see it, and anyone who comes into physical contact with the *Eye* for the first time must make a successful saving throw vs. spell at a -4 penalty or become completely obsessed with possessing the artifact. An obsessed individual will do anything to obtain the *Eye*, and once she or he possesses it, such a person will not part with it short of death. Only a *remove curse* followed by a *bless* spell permanently mitigates the obsession—and only if cast within the first year that a being is affected.

These effects on the owner's personality slowly fade at the same rate as they first occurred only if the *Eye* is lost and the obsession magically cured, as described above. Anyone possessing *Yuthla* for longer than a month become increasingly paranoid, seeing enemies and traitors everywhere. The owner's alignment slowly (and irrevocably) shifts toward evil during the first year of possessing the *Eye*. (The lawful, neutral, and chaotic axis of a being's alignment remains unaffected.)

The Eye exhibits an extremely dangerous side effect. Over 30 different words trigger (like a *magic mouth* spell) a defense mechanism which causes the *Eye* to levitate approximately 6 feet off the ground, start spinning, and then unleash one random beholder eye power per round in a random direction. It continues doing this for 2d6 rounds before sinking back down and becoming quiescent. There is no known way of altering the trigger words, nor any complete record of what they are. It also seems that some of these words are integral parts of commonly employed wizard spells such as *fireball* and *dispel magic*.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- Yuthla the Eye of the Beholder can be permanently destroyed by burying it deeper in Toril than any beholder has ever gone for 99 years.
- The Eye must be trampled into dust by an army of 1,000 stone giants.
- The Eye must blinded by Tyr.
- The Eye must be bathed in a broth of holy water laced with a dozen drops of gorgon's blood in which the eyestalks of 77 beholders and the entire body of at least one death tyrant has been dissolved.
- The Eye must be placed in a pool of holy water lit by the radiance of a full moon and surrounded by a ring of inward-looking basilisk eyes.

## Zeladazar The Ghost Sword

The *Ghost Sword* is a long sword whose blade is invisible, though glimmers of light may sometimes been seen flashing along the unseen steel when it strikes something—armor for example—that bears an

enchantment. All that is normally visible of *Zeladazar* is a heavy steel hilt, from quillons to pommel. (The pommel nut is a burnished steel sphere as large as a small orange. The grip is wrapped in black leather, and the visible metal is blued, smooth-worn, and massive.

### History

In the waning, decadent days of Netheril, a peculiar (for his people) sorcerer named Twyluth Ornadyn hit upon the idea that the salvation of the Netherese lay in turning their magical skills and lives back to living in harmony with nature and other living things. Ornadyn foresaw the need for battle magic to safeguard the survival of the Netherese as they learned the ways of all life, and he envisaged an armory of enchanted blades whose wielders could communicate with each other over long distances through meditation and the blades' transmission of mental images and audible speech. He set about making a pair of these blades to test relevant existing magic and to develop new spells as necessary - but was slain by a treacherous apprentice, who snatched up one of the blades in the midst of it being imbued with an enchantment and beheaded Ornadyn. The headless archmage's body lived on through previously cast defensive magics and took up the other sword to avenge himself. In the ensuing battle, Ornadyn was hacked apart, but one of the blades exploded, destroying the apprentice utterly.

The surviving sword was found and passed into the possession of the Netherese archwizard Alados Sorngol, who dubbed it "the Sword of Dreams" because of the visions handling it brought. These images were sourced in the blade's enchantments and the revenant spirit of Ornadyn, who sent phantoms to frighten Alados and to wrest control of the blade from him. Their success was such that the terrified Alados bound new spells into the blade to make it a destroyer of undead—but died anyway when Ornadyn sent a last "blood spell" through the blade, searing the vitality of Alados with Ornadyn's own unlife, so that the essences of the two mages destroyed each other.

### Campaign Use

The *Ghost Sword* bears an enchantment that makes it teleport randomly from time to time. In this way, it has been traveling about Faerûn for centuries, passing from hand to hand among the sort of folk who dare to possess it—that is, adventurers, kings, and wizards fascinated by its powers.

Zeladazar brings images to those who possess it—images of dead beings that can be conversed with. Many adventurers have used these long-gone notables as sages and treasure guides for as long as they have held the blade.

### Powers

**Constant.** Only magic can make the invisible blade of *Zeladazar* visible. Whenever it is drawn, its wielder is immune to paralysis, *energy drain*, and *magic jar* spells and magics of all sorts, as well as enjoying all the benefits of a *ring of free action*. Its wielder is able to move and attack freely and normally, even when attacked by a *web*,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Control death tyrant, create death tyrant, and a description of death tyrants can be found in the Ruins of Undermountain boxed set. Death tyrants & undead beholders are also detailed in the MONSTROUS MANUAL accessory, Tyranteyes is found in The Seven Sisters accessory or treated as a specialized shapechange into the form of a beholder with all the corresponding magical powers.



*hold,* or *slow* spell (which *Zeladazar* gives its wielder complete immunity to) or when underwater (though the sword does not empower an air-breathing being to breathe under water).

The *Ghost Sword* does 1d12 points of damage to all living creatures (regardless of size), and 4d12 points per successful strike to all undead creatures. The touch of its blade destroys ghosts upon contact.

Once per day at dusk (even if the sword is underground or the sky is obscured by weather or magic), the phantom image of either a mortal being slain by the sword or an undead being destroyed by the sword appears above the blade, whether it is drawn or not. This image is visible to all creatures in the vicinity and may well seem frightening or menacing, but it is powerless and insubstantial. The magic of the sword empowers the image to speak in a language intelligible to the sword-bearer, and it the image always does so, usually cursing the wielder or commenting sardonically on his or her present doings and situation, according to the original creature's nature.

The sword-bearer can converse with this image and receives a full and truthful answer to the first question she or he puts to it every dusk in which it appears, ("Full" extends to complete descriptions of how to reach a particular locale, find a hiding place, or use a complicated magical item, not merely to simple "yes" or "no" answers such as a *speak with dead* spell compels.) Although some images are good liars and slick talkers, able to mislead, they must answer that initial direct question truthfully. Note that an observation about something by the sword-bearer that the image takes as a query and answers does not count as a question. Many images are helpful and even garrulous, serving as great sources of information about their times and personal deeds; such images often want the sword-bearer to find their treasures or long-hidden magic, rather than wishing him or her ill.

The sword-bearer cannot, however, control what being's image appears and may not even recognize the apparition. The sword is known to have destroyed or slain at least seven dragons (amethyst, black, blue, copper, red, silver, and white specimens), over two dozen archmages, close to a hundred lesser wizards, several warriors of fame, over three dozen priests, at least a dozen liches (including an alhoon or "illithilich"), a half-dozen vampires, and at least one king (Alzurth of Westgate, who ruled the city from 1117 DR to 1162 DR).

There is a way, it seems, to influence (not control) which phantom appears, This is usually stumbled upon by accident but has been learned at least once by deliberate experimentation. If the sword-wielder learns the name of a particular apparition and correctly guesses a traditional foe (type of creature, not necessarily an individual) of the image when it was alive (for example, orcs were traditional foes of the ranger Ongamar the Old), the bearer of the *Ghost Sword* can gain an 8 in 12 chance of bringing a desired apparition to his or her presence at the next dusk. To do this, the sword-bearer must use the sword to slay that traditional foe in the name of the now-dead being by calling out the image's name aloud during the battle or within 6 rounds after the death.

**Invoked.** Once every six turns, the wielder of *Zeladazar* can by silent will cause the blade to force all undead creatures within 60 feet to become visible and wholly substantial (in other words, nongaseous and unable to phase through solid objects). This spherical field of effect moves with the sword and lasts for one turn, affecting all undead beings it touches for the entire time the ability is active, even if *Zeladazar* or they move so as to lose contact with each other.

At will, the wielder of the *Ghost Sword* can cause the blade to detect liches or their phylacteries within a 90-foot radius. This magic shows liches of all sorts, from illithiliches to dracoliches,

despite whatever magical disguises or assumed shapes they may be employing, but discerns no other sort of undead. This power is called upon silently and causes any liches in its area of effect to glow with a white radiance visible to all sighted creatures.

Whenever *Zeladazar* has destroyed an undead creature, its wielder can (within 6 rounds only) call upon the blade to *teleport without error* the wielder and all worn or carried gear to any locale on Toril even slightly known to the wielder. The blade does not carry along any other living creature.

**Curse.** Whenever *Zeladazar* destroys an undead creature, there is a 4 in 12 chance it vanishes instantly, teleporting itself away without its wielder to a random location in Faerûn where it can present itself to a new hero. When so appearing, *Zeladazar* levitates at about head height for a human male and hums and glows faintly to attract attention. These phenomena cease as soon as the blade is touched by living flesh.

# Suggested Means of Destruction

- The Ghost Sword must be struck by destructive spells hurled simultaneously by seven liches.
- The Ghost Sword must be immersed in holy water into which are dropped the phylacteries of two active liches, the dust or bones of a demilich, and at least three drops of blood spilled from a living creature by a revenant.
- The Ghost Sword will shatter if it is held in the flame of a candle consecrated to Kelemvor that is lit on an altar of Mystra when the altar is bathed in the light of a full moon.
- The Ghost Sword will crumble to dust if touched by an avatar of Jergal.



One can never be sure what seemingly minor magical item might turn out to be an artifact.



## Appendix I:

# Gemstone Tables



riginally found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Adventures* hardcover (now out of print), these tables are useful in constructing magical

items, gem-encrusted knick-knacks, and objets d'art. They correspond with the gemstone values given in the Dungeon Master *Guide* and the values assigned these gemstones in the Magic of Items chapter in this book. Determine the value of each gemstone or group of gemstones on the table below and check for gem variations as described in the Dungeon Master *Guide*. Then go to the appropriate table below and roll the stone type.

#### Gems of The Realms

d100		Base
Roll	Class	Value
01-25	Ornamental stones	10 gp
26-50	Semiprecious stones	50 gp
51-65	Fancy stones	100 gp
66-80	Precious stones	500 gp
81-90	Hardstones	Varies
91	Shells	Varies
92-99	Gems	1,000 gp
100	Jewels	5,000 gp

Ten percent of these gems are worth more or less than their base value, either because of imperfections or a particularly splendid cut. Use the Gem Variations table.

#### Gem Variations

### d8

#### Roll Result

1	Stone increases to the next higher
	value; roll again, ignoring the 1
	result. *

- 2 Stone is double base value.
- 3 Stone is 10-60% above base value.
- 4 Stone is 10-40% below base value.
- 5 Stone is half base value
- Stone is decreased to next lower base value; roll a d6 again, ignoring a 6 result. \* \*
- 7 8 Stone is uncut and in rough form (if possible). Value is 10% of that listed until polished and cut by someone with gem cutting proficiency. At that time, roll again on this chart with a d6

\*Above 5,000 gp, the base value of the stone doubles each time. No stone can be greater than 100,000 gp.

\*\*Below 10 gp, values decrease to 5 gp, 1 gp, 5 sp, and then 1 sp. No stone can be worth less than 1 sp, and not stone can decrease more than five places from its initial value.

## Ornamental Stones (Base Value 10 gp)

(Dase Value	
d100 Roll	Result
01-02	Agni mani
03-04	Algae
05-06	Augelite
07-08	Azurite
09-10	Banded agate
11-12	Bluestone
13-14	Blue quartz
15-16	Chrysocolla
17-18	Corstal
19-20	Crown of silver
21-22	Disthene
23-24	Epidote
25-26	Eye agate
27-28	Fire agate
29-30	Fluorspar (fluorite)
31-32	Frost agate
33-34	Goldline
35-36	Greenstone
37-38	Hematite
39-40	Hyaline
41-42	Lapis lazuli
43-44	Lynx eye
45-46	Malachite
47-48	Microcline
49-50	Moss agate
51-52	Nelvine
53-54	Nune
55-56	Obsidian
57-58	Oolite
59-60	Ophealine
61-62	Rhodochrosite
63-64	Rosaline
65-66	Saganite
67-68	Sanidine
69-70	Sarbossa
71-72	Satin spar
73-74	Sharpstone
75-76	Sheen
77-78	Silkstone
79-80	Snowflake obsidian
81-82	Sunstone
83-84	Thuparlial
85-86	Tiger eye agate
87-88	Turquoise
89-90	Variscite
91-92	Violine

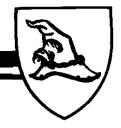
93-94	Webstone
95-96	Wonderstone
97-98	Woodtine
99-100	Zarbrina

## Semiprecious Stones (Base Value 50 gp)

(Base Value	30 Gp)
d100 Roll	Result
01-02	Alestone
03-04	Andar
05-06	Aventurine
07-10	Bloodstone
11-12	Boakhar
13-15	Carnelian
16-18	Chalcedony
19-21	Chrysoprase
22-24	Citrine
25-26	Clelophane
27-28	Datchas
29-30	Dioptase
31-32	Gold sheen
33-34	Hambergyle
35-36	Hydrophane
37-38	Hypersthene
39-40	Iol
41-42	Irtios
43-45	Jasper
46-47	Luriyl
48-49	Malacon
50-51	Mellochrysos
52-54	Moonstone
55-56	Mykaro
57-58	Mynteer
59-62	Onyx
63-64	Orprase
65-66	Phenalope
67-68	Rainbow obsidian
69-72	Rock crystal
73-74	Samarskite
75-77	Sardonyx
78-80	Serpentine
81-82	Skydrop
83-86	Smoky quartz
87-88	Spodumene
89-91	Star rose quartz
92-93	Tabasheer
94-95	Tchazar
96-97	Witherite
98-100	Zircon

## Fancy Stones (Base Value 100 gp)

•	• / /
d100 Roll	Result
01-06	Alexandrite
07-14	Amber



<b>d100 Roll</b>	<b>Result</b>
15-22	Amethyst
23-26	Angelar's skin
27-30	Brandeen
31-36	Chrysoberyl
37-44	Coral
45-50	Jade
51-54	Jargoon
55-60	Jet
61-64	Kornerupine
65-68	Laeral's tears
69-72	Octel
73-76	Scapra
77-80	Shandon
81-84	Sinhalite
86-88	Star diopside
89-92	Tourmaline
93-94	Tremair
95-96	Ulvaen
97-98	Waterstar
99-100	Ziose

## Precious Stones (Base Value 500 gp)

d100 Roll	Result
01-07	Aquamarine
08-14	Eudase
15-21	Flamedance
22-29	Garnet
30-37	Heliodor
38-44	Horn coral
45-51	Orbaline
52-59	Pearl
60-67	Peridot
68-75	Raindrop
76-81	Rusteen
82-88	Sphene
89-95	Spinel
96-100	Topaz
	_

### Gems (Base Value 1,000 gp)

d100 Roll	Result
01-08	Black opal
09-16	Fire opal
17-24	Jasmal
25-32	Moonbar
33-40	Opal
41-48	Orblen
49-56	Orl
57-64	Ravenar
65-72	Red tears
73-76	Sapphire
77-79	Shou Lung amethyst
80-82	Shou Lung topaz
83-89	Tomb jade
90-94	Water opal
95-100	Zendalure

## Jewels (Base Value 5,000 gp)

•	3 31 /
d100 Roll	Result
01-06	Amaratha
07-17	Beljuril
18-25	Black sapphire
26-36	Diamond
37-47	Emerald
48-58	Jacinth
59-69	Kings' tears
70-71	Rogue stone
72-82	Ruby
83-85	Shou Lung emerald
85-93	Star ruby
94-100	Star sapphire

### Hardstones

d100 Roll	Result
01-06	Alabaster (5 sp)
07-12	Archon (2 gp)
13-18	Hornbill ivory (7 sp)
19-24	Iris agate (2 gp)
25-30	Ivory (1d6-1 gp, depending on
	quality)
31-36	Lumachella (26 sp)
37-42	Luspeel (3 gp)
43-48	Marble (3 gp)
49-54	Meerschaum (2 gp)
55-60	Pipestone (1 gp)
61-66	Psaedros (6 sp)
67-72	Serpentine stone (3 gp)
73-78	Soapstone (9 sp)
79	Star metal (10,000 gp)
80-85	Sulabra (7 sp)
86-91	Tempskya (1 gp)
92-95	Turritella (8 sp)
96-100	Xylopal (22 sp)
T * . 1	

Listed prices are per pound, and when determining treasure, the number of these found is actually the number of pounds, not the number of individual stones.

### Shells

(Price per Specimen)

d100	
Roll	Result
01-07	Abalone (10 gp red, 25 gp green)
08-14	Black helmet (45 gp)
15-21	Conch (10 gp)
21-28	Tiger cowrie (10 gp)
29-33	Pearl cowrie (20 gp)
34-36	Opal cowrie (100 gp)
37	Purple star cowrie (4,000 gp)
38-44	Flame helmet (50 gp)
45-51	Horned helmet (50 gp)
52-58	Mother-of-pearl (5 sp for 1 lb.)
59-65	Nacre (1 gp for 1 lb.)
66-72	Nautilus (5 gp)

d100	
Roll	Result
73-79	Red helmet (20 gp)
80-85	Sardonyx helmet (40 gp)
86-90	Shambos (1d6-1 gp per shell plate)
91-94	Trochus (4 gp)
95-98	Turbo (2 gp)
99-100	Unio (1 gp)

#### Shells

Shells are valued for their vivid coloration, which often fades after moderate to prolonged exposure to sunlight. Shells are rarely used as currency, but rare shells are sold for high prices to collectors (for example, the purple star cowrie). Bear in mind that price and resale value for rare shells vary wildly. Rare shells may be considered to be as valuable as gemstones—but only to collectors.

Note that the various helmet shell species are prized for cameo work, the price given for conch is paid only for large, unblemished specimens useable in cameo work, and cowrie prices vary according to color, pattern, and rarity, from 10 gp for pale tiger black-and-white specimens to 4,000 gp for purple star specimens.

Shambos is the name given to tortoise shell. This is a misnomer; the plates of shell are not from a tortoise at all, but from a sea turtle found in tropical waters. A single, undamaged carapace will yield 37 separate plates if properly handled. Thirteen of these plates are valued in gem work, and are known as "blades." The 24 remaining edgeplates are of little value and are usually damaged from activity during the turtle's life. The plates are separated from the turtle's skeleton by heat, but the fire must be tended with skill, or excessive heat will darken the color of the shell, ruining it for ornamental use.

A special note concerning trochus (great top shell) and turbo (green snail) shells: The prices quoted in the table are for giant specimens. Turbo fetches such a price only when it has been polished to a pearly sheen. Smaller shells of both species are sold for as little as 5 cp per pound and are cut and polished to be sold as mother-of-pearl (the ordinary pearly material used for inlay work, buttons, etc.) or, if of "fire luster" are sold as nacre for similar uses.

Unio shells are simply unusually large fresh-water pearl mussels, drag-netted from rivers for buttons and similar uses. Gambling tokens in Faerûn are often fashioned of such material.



# Appendix II: Spell and Magical Item Index



rom time to time readers may find it useful to swiftly locate specific spells and magical items detailed in these pages-wherefore this

handy index. Spells merely mentioned in passing rather than detailed in full in this tome, are not indexed here. A complete alphabetical listing of artifacts is found in the Table of Contents of this volume, so they are not repeated here under their own heading. Spell classes and levels are abbreviated thus: Pr 5 is a 5th-level priest spell, and Wiz 7 is a 7th-level wizard spell. Cooperative magic priest spells are designated with an asterisk.

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# Volo's Guide to ALL THINGS MAGICAL

### by Ed Greenwood with Eric L. Boyd

For aeons, folk have struggled to master the world of Toril through the use of magic. The human race has stolen what magical knowledge it can from the elves and other races, gained more through worship, and created the rest by building on the work of those who have gone before. For centuries, human wizards have experimented with new spells and variations on existing magic, striving to grow ever more powerful. They have succeeded to an astonishing degree, but through the death of secretive mages and the destruction of realms and entire peoples, much of the lore they built has been lost, hidden, or distorted. To pierce this heavy cloak of missing knowledge, cryptic sorcerous codes, and misinformation requires a writer of rare daring, persistence, and magical skill. Such a man is Volothamp Geddarm, famous traveler of the Realms—and this is his most important, long-suppressed work, the book that archwizards could not keep from your hands!

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